

**Storytelling, Histories, and Place-making:
Te Wāhipounamu South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area**

A Thesis
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Abstract

This thesis tells two intertwined stories about stories about nature. One, theoretical, asks what stories and histories do and why storytelling matters in place-making and policy-making. The second questions the effect of narratives of pristine nature on place-meanings in southwest New Zealand, serving as a case study to illustrate the abstract relationships of the first. Throughout reflexive consideration of my research journey as academic storytelling contributes to my theoretical arguments.

Narratives help humans make sense of time and their place in the world. Stories and histories both shape new and reflect current understandings of the world. Thus narratives of nature and place are historically, geographically, and culturally specific. Place-meanings result from the *geography of stories* layered over time on a physical location. In the iterative process of continually re-presenting landscapes in specific places, negotiation between storytellers with variable power shapes physical environments and future place-meanings.

This thesis uses the pristine story to explore these links between stories and histories, place-meanings, and policy decisions. From the arrival of New Zealand's first colonists to today's perceived "clean green" landscape, narratives distinguishing timeless nature from human culture have influenced policy-making in multiple ways. Focusing specifically on understandings of the conservation lands now listed by UNESCO as Te Wāhipounamu South-West World Heritage Area, I trace the origins and evolution of three dominant narrative strands – world heritage, national parks, and Ngāi Tahu cultural significance. Using post-colonial understandings of conservation as cultural colonization, I consider how the pristine narrative obscured Ngāi Tahu understandings of the area. I explore how the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 has begun to shift place-meanings by altering power-geometries between storytellers. Participant-observation in Department of Conservation visitor centres, however, illustrates that legislated stories and storytelling processes are expressed differently in representations of land in specific locations.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Figures, Tables, & Images.....	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Pristine Nature as a Cultural Landscape.....	1
Primary Research Objective: Theorizing the Role of Stories in Place-making.....	3
Stories and Storytelling about Pristine Mountains as Method.....	5
Secondary Research Objective: A New Zealand Wilderness Myth?.....	7
Thesis Plot and Chapter Organization.....	10
Chapter 2: A Theory of Stories and Storytelling.....	12
Stories and Histories as Ways of Knowing.....	13
Shaping Reality: Stories, Histories, Identities, and Place-meanings.....	15
Stories as Influenced by Power-geometries between Storytellers.....	19
Reflecting Reality: Representations of Stories as Method.....	22
Academic Research as Storytelling.....	24
This Thesis: Telling Stories about Stories.....	26
Chapter 3: A Geography of Stories in Southwest New Zealand.....	29
Southwest New Zealand as Case Study.....	29
A Conventional Story of Te Wāhipounamu.....	32
Advantages and Limitations of Te Wāhipounamu as Case Study.....	36
Layers of Names, Layers of Stories.....	37
A Geography of Stories in Southwest New Zealand.....	42
“How Do You Actually Do That?”: Thesis Methodology.....	42
Mapping a Geography of Stories.....	44
(A) Collecting Representations of Te Wāhipounamu.....	44
(B) Analyzing Representations to Identify the Story They Tell	45
Analyzing a Historical Geography of Storytelling.....	47
(C) Trace the History of Storytelling over Time	47
(D) Explain History of Storytelling Using Broader Context	48
Evolving Place-Meanings in Southwest New Zealand.....	49
Chapter 4: The Creation of Te Wāhipounamu World Heritage Area... ..	50
“A child of its time and lineage:” World Heritage as a Type of Place.....	50
From Monumental Sites to Cultural Landscapes: An Evolving Global Conversation.....	55
Telling World Heritage Stories in New Zealand.....	59
1986: Three DLS Nominations under Natural Criteria.....	60
1993: Cultural Recognition for Tongariro.....	62
1989: An Expanded World Heritage Area in Southwest New Zealand.....	64
The Impact of World Heritage Stories in New Zealand.....	68
Tongariro World Heritage Park.....	68
Te Wāhipounamu South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area	69

Chapter 5: Universal Stories in Local Place-Making: Four National Parks	73
National Parks: Balancing Human Use and Nature Protection	73
Iconic but Worthless: Nineteenth Century Attitudes towards New World Mountains	78
Local Negotiations: Conservation and Preservation Efforts in Early New Zealand	80
Protecting Nature and Promoting Recreation: The Post-1952 National Park System	87
A Global Critique of the Yellowstone Preservation Model	92
A Shifting Balance: Stories of “This Place” vs. “This Type of Place”	96
Chapter 6: Negotiating Place-Meanings: Ngāi Tahu Stories’ Evolving Role in Conservation	99
A Ngāi Tahu Geography of Stories in Southwest New Zealand	100
Crafting an Ethical Methodology: Cross-cultural Academic Storytelling	104
The Waitangi Tribunal: Retelling the Story of New Zealand	106
Te Kereeme: The Ngāi Tahu Claim	108
A Long and Winding Road: Decolonizing Place-Meanings in Southwest New Zealand	113
Chapter 7: A Geography of Storytelling in Southwest New Zealand	116
Interpretation Materials: A Window into Storytelling Negotiations	116
Site-specific Storytelling: Devolved Production of Interpretation Materials	119
Interpretation Sits in Places: Te Wāhipounamu’s Meaning from Specific Locations	124
A Tale of Two Visitor Centres	125
Selling the World Heritage Story: Haast Visitor Centre	136
Interpretation Fossils: Last Days of the Mount Cook/Aoraki Visitor Centre	139
New Stories under Construction: Aoraki/Mount Cook Visitor Centre Redesign	141
Fluid Meanings Made in Places	143
Chapter 8: Conclusion	145
A Theoretical Story about Stories	145
The Pristine Story in Southwest New Zealand	147
The Story of My Research Journey	151
References	155
List of Interview Conversations	168

List of Figures, Tables, & Images

Figures

Figure 2.1: The Iterative Process of Storytelling & Place-making through Time.....	18
Figure 3.1: World Heritage Text Box on DoC Pamphlets.....	31
Figure 3.2: Te Wāhipounamu South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area.....	32
Figure 3.3: South Island Roads and Towns.....	34
Figure 5.1: Map of National Parks and DoC Visitor Centres.....	74
Figure 6.1: Te Waipounamu (the South Island).....	100
Figure 6.2: The Settlement Jigsaw.....	111

Tables

Table 3.1: A Geography of Stories in Suthwest New Zealand.....	40
Table 3.2: Thesis Methodology.....	43
Table 3.3: Discursive Sites Where Stories about Land are Represented.....	45
Table 5.1: Years of First Protection and National Park Status	87

Images

Image 1: Haast Visitor Centre exterior.....	127
Image 2: Haast Visitor Centre landscaping.....	127
Image 3: World Heritage plaque outside Haast Visitor Centre.....	127
Image 4: Picture Window at Haast.....	128
Image 5: Te Wāhipounamu Map at Haast.....	128
Image 6: Settlement Panel at Haast.....	129
Image 7: Penguin Panel at Haast.....	129
Image 8: Wilderness Highways display at Haast.....	129
Image 9: Aoraki/Mount Cook Visitor Centre.....	130
Image 10: Hermitage.....	130
Image 11: Insects display at Aoraki/Mount Cook.....	131
Image 12: Stuffed weasel eating rabbit at Aoraki/Mount Cook.....	131
Image 13: Predator captions at Aoraki/Mount Cook.....	131
Image 14: Malte Brun hut replica at Aoraki/Mount Cook.....	131
Image 15: Hut display in front of Wilderness display at Aoraki/Mount Cook.....	132
Image 16: Wilderness quote at Aoraki/Mount Cook.....	132
Image 17: Detail of Settlement Panel.....	132
Image 18: Bilingual ice panel at Aoraki/Mount Cook.....	133
Image 19: Tapu mountain sign at Aoraki/Mount Cook.....	133
Image 20: Ngāi Tahu floor panel.....	133
Image 21: Waka stone at Aoraki/Mount Cook.....	134
Image 22: Ship Creek on-site interpretation.....	134

Chapter One

Introduction

Los Angeles International Airport, 5 February 2007, 8:30 pm. The door to Air New Zealand Flight 1 to Auckland has not yet been closed. We will not have control of our own in-flight entertainment screens until after the safety briefing. But instead of blank screens, a montage of iconic images of New Zealand cycles through in front of my eyes: rocky beaches at sunset, dense green forests, rugged snow-covered peaks.

One part of me thrills to the associations such landscapes evoke – primeval beauty, pristine wildness, a playground in paradise. The other part of me cringes at the absence of people and the overuse of familiar tropes of light and perspective. They look like images of the American West. Although they depict places I do not yet recognize, the story these images tell is eerily familiar to me, an American on her way to New Zealand to explore the real implications of just these sorts of associations with the non-human world most of us call nature.

Pristine Nature as a Cultural Landscape

Images such as the ones in the Air New Zealand boarding video abound in portrayals of contemporary New Zealand. Tourism New Zealand's award-winning "100% Pure" marketing campaign, which has sold the nation as a place of pristine nature since 1999, epitomizes their tremendous appeal and marketing potential (Tourism New Zealand 2007). Empirical marketing research similarly demonstrates the strength of associations held by both residents and international visitors between New Zealand and "clean and green" natural beauty. One typical example is the 2003 report commissioned by Tourism New Zealand which finds "that New Zealand's landscape is at the heart of people's Perceptions" [sic] (Colmar Brunton 2003, p. 23).

Each of these clean and green images represents a story that we use to understand the world. In this case, it is a story of New Zealand as a pristine, timeless landscape. The Oxford English Dictionary Online (June 2007, 'pristine') gives two meanings for pristine: "Of or relating to the earliest period or state; original, former; primitive, ancient" and "Of something natural: unspoilt by human interference, untouched; pure." The OED Online also notes that the first definition is merging into the second. A particular narrative about the relationship between the human and non-human

world underlies such portrayals.¹ First, if pristine landscapes are by definition “unspoiled” by humans, then sustained human presence is something which changes or spoils a nature that exists separate from people. Second, the idea that humans can spoil nature contains a particular assumption about nature and history. History necessitates human presence; there is not history without humans. Implicitly, areas portrayed as without human presence are also assumed to exist outside of history (Spence 1999; Bayet 1998; Neumann 1998; Cronon 1995).

The international success of the 100% Pure marketing campaign testifies to the ubiquity of such representations. However, their ubiquity and the emotional strength of many peoples’ reactions (including my own) can obscure the particularities of this way of understanding the non-human world. Environmental historians, geographers, anthropologists, and others have clearly demonstrated that views of nature are socially constructed (e.g. Pawson & Brooking 2002; Feld & Basso 1996; Cronon 1995). People in different times and cultures have told other stories to make sense of the relationship between the human and non-human. Environmental historians and historical geographers in particular have focused on understanding the origin and impacts of the narrative of timeless nature (e.g. Merchant 2004; Callicott & Nelson 1998, Merchant 1989; Worster 1994; Thomas 1983).

What I will refer to as the story of the pristine is therefore neither new nor unique to New Zealand. However, even a brief survey of the country’s history demonstrates that in New Zealand as in other western nations this way of viewing nature has had important consequences. The natural environment has long been used to represent the country to the world and served as a symbol of New Zealand identity for its citizens. Similarly, past and current portrayals of protected areas influence the particular management choices – such as poisoning possums to protect indigenous flora and fauna – that shaped and continue to shape the physical landscape of New Zealand’s conservation estate² (Pawson & Brooking 2002).

¹ I am using non-human to describe what is generally referred to as nature in order to emphasize that the dichotomy between nature and culture is a historically and culturally specific way of looking at humans’ place in the world. This use of the term follows White 1997.

² In New Zealand, conservation estate collectively refers to those areas formally designated as protected areas, including national parks, various types of reserves, and other lands managed by the Department of Conservation.

Recognizing that the pristine story is socially constructed and has been told differently in varying times and places does not belie its power. Based on implicit and sometimes unconsciously held assumptions about what nature is and how humans should interact with it, modern societies choose to preserve some land from productive use and manage certain areas as conservation estate. Narratives about land provide the frameworks within which policy debates occur. Through human labour, they become inscribed on the landscape itself.

Pristine places are in fact explicitly cultural landscapes whose identity is shaped by the stories told about them throughout their histories. One cannot fully understand policy debates or make informed policy decisions without examining the history of cultural meanings that shape their contours. Unfortunately, the tendency to portray natural spaces as timeless obscures their very important historical contexts and erases how their identities emerged from past storytelling.

Geographers understand the process of stories and action interacting to form a cultural landscape as place-making, though scholars differ on exactly what constitutes a place and how places come to be, as I explore in Chapter 2. In both its subject and its method, this thesis explores the relationship between storytelling, place-making, and policy-making. By looking closely at the development and impact of the story of the pristine, I address broader theoretical questions about place-making: What is the relationship between how people perceive land and how they choose to physically use or not use it? What determines which individual stories are incorporated into collective cultural stories about places? What aspects of these place-making processes are universal across times, spaces and cultures and which elements are historically, geographically, and/or culturally specific? Since academic research may be thought of as a form of storytelling, what is the role of academic stories in place-making and policy-making?

Primary Research Objective: Theorizing the Role of Stories in Place-making

My main objective in this thesis is to tell a theoretical story about the importance of stories and histories in processes of place-making and in the policy choices that result. Stories are powerful vehicles for construction of meanings of physical space and transmission of values and norms for use

of that space. As a cognitive function closely tied to memory, stories help humans make sense of the world around them and serve as a means of expressing understanding. The link between narrative and the creation of meaning has been observed and studied in fields as diverse as psychology, education, religion, and politics, as I explore in greater detail in Chapter 2. Storytelling allows us as individuals to understand and express our identities as well as our relationship to the rest of the world. Similarly, as cultures and societies, we use stories to transmit values and knowledge as well as persuade others and explain or justify actions. Narrative is also a key means by which we make sense of time and the relation of past to present; children only develop a sense of history once they are able to narrate (Baldock 2006, p. 17-38). Stories and histories, therefore, are closely linked ways of knowing that have the dual function of *shaping* our view of reality and *reflecting* the understanding of the world we already hold.

William Cronon makes just this point in regard to histories of how land has been perceived and used in an influential 1992 article on the practice of environmental history. Cronon (1992, p. 1347) uses the example of the Dust Bowl to explore how narrative form matters in history writing. He examines two books about this 1930s drought, written by two authors who “dealt with virtually the same subject, had researched many of the same documents, and agreed on most of their facts” yet reached drastically different conclusions. In one history the Dust Bowl is portrayed as a “natural disaster” which humans heroically overcame, demonstrating “a triumph of individual and community spirit.” In contrast, the other portrays the drought of the 1930s as a natural climate cycle of the semiarid Great Plains; this story “is less about the failures of nature than about the failures of human beings to accommodate themselves to nature.” Observing that in both cases “historical analysis derives much of its force from the upward or downward sweep of the plot,” Cronon demonstrates that in histories as in stories narrative choices of setting, characters, and plot equally influence the meaning one takes away (p. 1348).

Grappling with how to usefully incorporate the insights of postmodernism and literary theory into environmental history, Cronon encourages scholars to both pay attention to the role of past stories in past land use decisions and to consciously embrace themselves as storytellers when conceiving of their work. Emphasizing that “because we use them to motivate and explain our actions, the stories

we tell change the way we act in the world,” he “urge[s] upon environmental historians the task of telling not just stories about nature, but stories about stories about nature” (Cronon 1992, p. 1375).

In this thesis, I take up Cronon’s charge and extend it in order to understand not only historical land use decisions but also the contemporary relationship between collective stories, current place-meanings, constellations within conservation politics, and ultimately the policy decisions that result from political negotiation. I tell two intertwined stories about stories about nature. One is about the role of stories in shaping place identities and thus policy decisions made based on those identities. The second is about how the pristine narrative of nature without humans has developed over time and has impacted contemporary conservation policies in New Zealand. This second particular story serves as a means of illuminating and illustrating the broader theoretical relationships of the first story.

In the course of narrating the link between stories, place-meanings, and policy, I argue that a place’s meaning is formed from a *geography of stories*. Building on other conceptions that emphasize the link between narratives and meanings of places, I argue that a place is made up of the mosaic of stories a given group or society associates with a given physical location. Each of these varying stories is told by human storytellers situated in larger cultural, historical, political and geographical contexts. I term these sedimentary layers of sometimes complementary and sometimes conflicting narratives a geography of stories and view their respective influence on the collective story as being determined by underlying power relations between storytellers.

Stories and Storytelling about Pristine Mountains as Method

Since academic histories are just a particular kind of story, qualitative social science can be conceived as an act of storytelling; hence Cronon’s urging to tell *stories* about stories about nature. From this insight about academic writing as storytelling comes my overarching research methodology. This study approaches the academic research process as the written creation of a narrative, following the lead of other post-modern qualitative scholarship (e.g. Garman & Piantanida 2006; Berger & Quinney 2005; also see Hay 2000, p. 161-182, and Bolker 1998). I conceive the thesis

as a story I authored which has gradually emerged from my personal struggles to understand and write about the multiple and sometimes conflicting cultural perspectives about landscape – and particularly the often-represented-as-pristine mountains of the southwest South Island – I have encountered in my months exploring New Zealand. This theoretical position has thus led me to include myself and the story of my research journey explicitly in this introduction. As appropriate to aid the reader in understanding my arguments, my story and experiences will also appear within the rest of the thesis. From the same conception of my work as a story comes my use of devices more often associated with literature, such as epigraphs to some chapters.

Post-colonial scholarship of power relations in the academic research process provides a second rationale for including myself and my story in this thesis (e.g. Tuhiwai Smith 1999, Mihesuah 1998; also see Hay 2000, p. 23-36). The objective, academic voice has served as an instrument of silencing, prejudice, and even dispossession in the past. Thus adopting a more personal tone (such as using the “I” pronoun) and maintaining a reflexive perspective on my own work provides a helpful corrective to minimize the chances of repeating this history, particularly since the subject of this thesis is a culture which is not my own. Paying attention to my own positionality in regards to my subject is analogous to paying attention to storyteller context in the stories I examine.

This linking of the narrative of my own research journey and the theoretical story of this thesis is one reason the story of pristine mountains formed an obvious case study to explore my broader theoretical questions and develop my theory of stories and storytelling. As an environmental historian of the American West and the Colorado Rockies, sitting on a plane in Los Angeles, the Air New Zealand images brought to mind not only the pristine associations of what Americans would call wilderness, but also a particular body of academic literature critiquing the way those associations polarize debates about land use (e.g. Callicott & Nelson 1998). This story – often referred to as the American wilderness myth - suggests that the desirable attributes of American national character came from encounters with the New World’s wild lands and that by revisiting pristine landscapes we as contemporary citizens can share our ancestor’s formative experiences.

In this last year in New Zealand, I have sought out stories about the South Island’s protected mountain lands, encountering representations during both research travel and personal recreation and

focusing particularly on the Te Wāhipounamu South-West New Zealand World Heritage area in the southwest. During this time, my theoretical understanding of what stories are and how they influence policy choices has developed from constant comparison. On the one hand, I have my academic and personal knowledge of how and with what consequences wilderness stories are told in the western United States; on the other, I have observed the subtly different formulation, function, and policy impact of the pristine story in New Zealand. This comparative framework thus makes up a key aspect of my methodology. However, this thesis is not specifically comparative in its content. While I do make use of both American and New Zealand literature as appropriate, the specific histories of how wilderness stories have influenced land policies in the United States has been extensively addressed elsewhere (e.g. Louter 2006; Simpson 2005; Cravens 2004; Barringer 2002; Jacoby 2001; Sellars 1997).

Secondary Research Objective: A New Zealand Wilderness Myth?

Stories and storytelling about pristine mountains in New Zealand thus serve to illustrate my thesis' theoretical questions. The second story about stories about nature explored as a case study is also interesting in its own right, as scholars have thus far not given evolving cultural understandings of protected land in New Zealand the attention they deserve. The case study answers two related secondary research questions: How have stories of the pristine shaped New Zealand conservation policy? Specifically, what role has this narrative played in the current understanding of protected areas as areas where tourism and recreation are appropriate but productive use is not?

These two research questions are founded on the centrality U.S. environmental historians give to the American wilderness myth, providing a second rationale for using the story of the pristine to explore my wider theoretical questions. As settler societies founded by European colonists, European – and especially English – perceptions of mountain land shaped how nineteenth century visitors and colonists understood alpine environments in both New Zealand and the western United States (Macfarlane 2003; Nicolson 1959). Rugged high altitude areas and iconic mountain scenery in both

regions received early, frequent (and arguably even disproportionate) attention (Pawson 2002, Nash 2001, Sax 1980). However, unlike in New Zealand, settlement of the western United States happened within a larger national context of stories about wilderness. The same stories remain central to both the United States' evolving understanding of its own history and to scholars' understanding of why stories matter in land use decisions.

Historians of the United States understand the wilderness myth as a key story in American history and have traced a wide range of impacts of this idea in land management policies (Callicott & Nelson 1998). Indeed, the practice and approaches of American environmental history with its focus on stories shaping land use were significantly influenced by scholarly analysis of the pristine narrative in now-classic works such as Henry Nash Smith's 1950 *Virgin Land* and the 1967 first edition of Roderick Nash's *Wilderness and the American Mind* (Smith 1950, Nash 2001). In contrast, no universal wilderness myth has shaped New Zealand nor played such a central role in its academic histories. While there are similar stories about pioneers improving pristine land that result from similar experiences as a settler society, these tropes have influenced national identity, place-meanings, and ultimately land policies in quite different ways than in the United States. By examining in a New Zealand context questions that have been thoroughly analyzed in the United States, I hope to add to our overall understanding of how historic attitudes about land – specifically the story of land as untouched by humans – continues to impact contemporary conservation policies in both countries. In addition to contributing to the theoretical story about the general case, this second story in this thesis adds to our understanding in two ways. First, it contributes to the history of conservation in New Zealand. Second, it provides an important trans-national comparative corrective to American literature that tends to juxtapose western and non-western views while ignoring other settler societies and equating western with American (e.g. Merchant 2004, Callicott & Nelson 1998).

It is useful to briefly review previous scholars of New Zealand stories about the pristine. The resource management literature is one place of such analysis. A number of applied theses on wilderness were written in the 1990s addressing how these ideas relate to protected area management (e.g. Horrox 1996; Shultis 1991). While they are useful studies for background, their focus on implementation of resource management policy and methodology of surveying backcountry user

groups means they tend to accept pristine stories rather uncritically, with none of the nuanced “great new wilderness” debate over what Cronon terms the “trouble with wilderness” that informs the US literature (Callicott & Nelson 1998). One exception is a 1994 thesis examining the idea of wilderness in light of (at that time) potentially using conservation lands to settle the Ngāi Tahu claim before the Waitangi Tribunal (White 1994). White’s thesis is an insightful examination of the difference between Pakeha (non-Māori) views of Mt. Cook and the importance of Aoraki to Ngāi Tahu (the Māori tribe of most of the South Island). However, there is more to be written on the subject, given that the settlement of the claim had not been negotiated when White was writing and that his narrow focus is conflict between Pakeha and Ngāi Tahu understandings at one time period.

In the New Zealand environmental history literature, tourism and protected lands such as national parks seem to have been significantly less favoured as a lens for studying past peoples’ relationship with the non-human world than in the American scholarship, which has seen a number of recent book-length studies (e.g. Louter 2006; Barringer 2002; Jacoby 2001). This is not to suggest that the topic has not been addressed at all. Eric Pawson’s chapter in *Environmental Histories of New Zealand* provided an overview of meaning of mountains and their use by early tourists (Pawson 2002). Kirstie Ross and Margaret Johnson have used recreation as a lens to understand perceptions of landscape, the former in the context of tramping clubs and the latter in the context of perceived and actual risk from mountain sports (Ross 1999; Johnson 1989). Chris Castagna examined Te Urewera National Park management plans from a discourse analysis and cultural colonialism perspective; her work fits within a larger literature examining the Eurocentric tendencies of certain conservation stories and practices (Castagna 2005). All these authors implicitly or explicitly acknowledge the way stories of the pristine influence New Zealand conservation policy, but none has taken it as the central focus of an extended analysis.

Two significant exceptions are Geoff Park and Val Kirby. Park’s series of essays in *Theatre Country* develops sophisticated arguments about the relationship between a culture’s understanding of its history and its understanding of pristine nature as found in today’s protected areas. A number of the essays, particularly “A Moment for Landscape,” focus on the link between historical stories and the practice of tourism. He addresses the ways that tourists’ lack of understanding of a place’s history

erases both the indigenous tangata whenua's past connection and the role of human action in constructing tourist landscapes. Given the wide-ranging scope of his project, however, Park's work does not fully explore the link between land use and narratives about pristine land as much as emphasize the link as a fruitful area for further exploration (Park 2006).

One other work that shares this thesis' interest in the wider impact of stories about protected areas is Val Kirby's PhD dissertation on *Heritage in Place* (1997), which explores how heritage is understood at different geographical scales using various case studies including Te Wāhipounamu South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area and South Westland. My work shares much in common with Kirby's. Both use narrative as part of our method and both make use of the world heritage area as a lens for the wider theoretical exploration. However, Kirby's primary focus was on examining heritage as a theoretical concept and exploring how different understandings of heritage lead to different ideas about managing that heritage (Kirby 1997). In contrast, I am interested in the sites and processes of storytelling and in the mechanisms by which stories are translated into land use. In addition, my study is able to incorporate developments between 1997 and 2007. Thus this thesis should be seen as an extension and complement to Kirby's earlier work.

Thesis Plot and Chapter Organization

The next chapter develops the theoretical foundations of my approach and methodology more fully. Chapter 2 presents my "theory of stories" that addresses my general questions about place-making and presents a model for understanding how stories, place-meanings, and land use decisions relate iteratively over time. It looks critically at what stories are and what they do, exploring in more detail their dual function of shaping understandings of places and reflecting understandings already held. It also explores the role of power in negotiation between storytellers. Chapter 3 then both explains the specifics of my mixed qualitative research methodology and presents the particular place – Te Wāhipounamu South-West World Heritage Area – which serves as a case study to ground my investigation through the ensuing chapters.

Three parallel chapters tracing how place-meanings in southwest New Zealand were negotiated follow Chapter 3. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 gradually move backward in time, using representations produced by diverse individuals in a variety of eras and places to explore how stories about land have changed over time. Each explores the contribution of a particular narrative strand – world heritage, national parks, and Ngāi Tahu cultural significance, respectively. Taken together, these three chapters explain the differing stories and power geometries that underlie the evolving understanding of the area in New Zealand society.

Chapter 6 ends by presenting the current mosaic of different stories about land told in New Zealand – especially between Māori and Pakeha – as an in-process political negotiation over land use and implicit contest of identities and differing perceptions of humans' place in the world. This ongoing negotiation and contestation happens in specific places, in signs and books and other storytelling locations that represent land and subtly make cultural meaning. Thus Chapter 7 brings the discussion to the detailed scale of comparing how stories of the pristine and stories of human history are told in different locations within Te Wāhipounamu South-West World Heritage Area. Using interpretation materials as a proxy for collective understandings of the place, I juxtapose the story of southwest New Zealand as told from the Haast Visitor Centre with that of the Aoraki/Mount Cook facility and relate variations between them to differences in conservancies' storytelling processes. In the case of Aoraki/Mount Cook, I further compare the story presented in existing interpretation materials with the story planned as in-progress visitor centre upgrades are completed in 2008. Telling this tale of two visitor centres demonstrates how stories of the area continue to evolve, shaping future place-meanings. Chapter 8 then concludes the work by presenting a summary of the preceding chapters' insights.

Chapter Two

A Theory of Stories and Storytelling

Life is not what one lived, but what one remembers and how one remembers it in order to recount it.

–Gabriel Garcia Marquez, epigraph to his autobiography Vivir para contaria

In this chapter, I argue that narrative has real power to shape human action. Storytelling is fundamental to processes of identity formation and place-making that in turn influence how people and cultures perceive and use their physical environments. Stories both reflect and re-produce collective stories that shape understandings of places in the present and transmit these cultural meanings through time. Thus analyzing stories and the storytelling processes that produced them provides a means of understanding the attitudes, values, and assumptions people hold about places. These place-meanings in turn determine how humans interpret and interact with non-human nature in particular locations, eras, and cultures.

Stories are culturally, historically, and geographically specific. Place-meanings are formed from the geography of specific stories layered on a given physical location. To understand the evolution of understandings of place through time we must tease out the sedimentary layers of stories that form them. Since stories are expressions and creations that cannot be understood without considering the background of those who narrate, any given geography of stories is shaped by the power-geometries between its storytellers. Since academic research is a form of storytelling, academic narratives – like other stories – can and must be subject to critical assessment of how they reflect their storyteller's historical context and position in society.

Stories and Histories as Ways of Knowing

Storytelling – the act of creating narratives³ – is a fundamental means by which people make sense of the world around them (Baldock 2006; Berger & Quinney 2005, p. 1-11; Abbott 2002; Schank 1990; White & Epston 1990). Carl Abbott (2002, p. 1) introduces the centrality of stories to the human condition in this way:

“Narrative is...something we all engage in, artists and non-artists alike. We make narratives many times a day, every day of our lives. And we start doing so almost from the moment we begin putting words together. As soon as we follow a subject with a verb, there is a good chance we are engaged in narrative discourse. ‘I fell down,’ the child cries, and in the process tells her mother a little narrative...Given the presence of narrative in almost all human discourse, there is little wonder that there are theorists who place it next to language itself as *the* distinctive human trait.”

Through telling stories we translate lived experience into language, into a form we are capable of understanding. This dual function of narrative – finding meaning as well as recounting it – is inherent in the etymology of the word itself, which “goes back to the ancient Sanskrit ‘gna,’ a root term that means ‘know,’ and that it comes down to us through Latin words for both ‘knowing’ (gnarus’) and ‘telling’ (‘narro’)” (Abbott 2002, p. 11).

Abbott goes on to support his argument about the universal importance of storytelling to the human creation of meaning by making two related points about memory and time. First, he references research that suggests a link between narrative capacity and the ability to retain memories. Children develop their first ability to tell stories at the age of three or four years, the same age from which they retain their first lasting memories. This correspondence has “led some to propose that memory itself is dependent on the capacity for narrative. In other words, we do not have any mental record of who we are until narrative is present as a kind of armature, giving shape to that record.” (Abbott 2002, p. 2-3; also see Baldock 2006,). Similarly, work on the fallibility of memory suggests that how we remember depends on how we narrate (Schank 1990; White & Epston 1990). Second, Abbott (2002, p. 3) explains how important narrative is to our experience of time:

³ Some scholars distinguish between narrative and story. To me this distinction seems arbitrary; I follow Arthur Frank who points out that “since narratives only exist in particular stories, and all stories are narratives, the distinction is hard to sustain” (Frank 1995, p. 188, as cited in Berger & Quinney 2005, p. 4).

“narrative is the principal way in which our species organizes its understanding of time...As we are the only species on earth with both language and a conscious awareness of the passage of time, it stands to reason that we would have a mechanism for expressing this awareness.”
[Emphasis in original]

Research in child development and with people with mental disabilities similarly suggests that the capacity to tell stories is necessary to comprehend the order of events in time. Until children can form narratives, they do not have a sense of history (Baldock 2006, p. 17-38). By organizing events in relation to others in the sequence of our lives, stories serve to shape and convey our understandings of what occurred when.

In the broadest sense, then, stories allow us to understand what something is by explaining its origin, how it came into being, what its history is. As Berger and Quinney explain, “narrative ...is about imbuing ‘life events with a temporal and logical order,’ about establishing continuity between the past, present and as yet unrealized future...narrative turns mere chronology – one thing after another – into ‘the purposeful action of plot’” (Ochs & Capps and Taylor as cited in Berger & Quinney 2005, p. 4). This link between story and history is expressed in their common etymology, which suggests that the two concepts only began to diverge quite late (‘story’ and ‘history,’ OED 1989). Abbott makes the same point when he demonstrates that to understand a picture of a sinking ship, we seek to understand the history or story behind how it came to be sinking (Abbott 2002: page 6-11). Therefore history also can be thought of as a way of knowing analogous to stories.

This argument about the universal function of storytelling in structuring and giving meaning to our knowledge of the world is further supported by the work of psychologists to understand and articulate how our brains function (Etherington 2004, p. 20-23). One example is educational psychologists; by studying how children learn, they have demonstrated the role of narrative in the ability to acquire and make use of complex ideas or concepts (Baldock 2006). A second example is the various talk therapy approaches which resolve mental health issues by allowing the patient to narrate and then re-narrate their understanding of a problem, its origins, their reactions to it, and ultimately their healing from it. Implicitly, cognitive behavioural therapy has used narration for a long time, though without calling it by that name. However, since the 1980s this approach has been most explicitly used and recognized by narrative therapy. Developed by Michael White & David Epston

and set out in *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* (1990), narrative therapy not only uses storytelling to heal, but explicitly conceives narrating as mediating the relationship between the self and the world. In other words, for narrative therapy adherents the essence of the self is a storyteller.

Shaping Reality: Stories, Histories, Identities, and Place-meanings

If telling stories is how we make sense of the world and time, if narrative is how children learn, if storytelling can be used to heal our psyches, then it follows that stories have real power to *shape* reality as we see it.⁴ While they may be socially constructed initially and constantly re-produced through time, they nonetheless have actual power to influence what people do. This insight about stories is central to the immense bodies of work known as post-structuralism and post-positivism (Hay 2000, p. 160-182). Similarly, arguments about the role of language and images in shaping our perspective on reality are well-known and have been made by post-modern academics in fields as diverse as psychology and cognitive science (e.g. White & Epston 1990; Schank 1990) as well as in the various works of social science I draw on throughout this chapter.

For individuals, identity – their understanding of what they are – is shaped by their memory of past experience as expressed in stories. This makes sense if we recall the link between narrative and the capacity for memory suggested above. In narrating our lives, we narrate ourselves into being. Identity is formed and continually re-produced by someone's explanation of how s/he came to be who they are. There is often a comparative element in these stories. We not only narrate ourselves into being, but narrate ourselves into being as separate people, in a gradual process that begins when we first start to absorb and comprehend differences between ourselves and the rest of the world (Baldock 2006, p. 17-28). At the same time, we are narrated into being by others and the stories they inscribe on us.

⁴ In making this argument, I am following a particular position in an ongoing debate in human geography. For a simple overview of the question of whether there exists a reality apart from the language and depictions we use to portray and comprehend it, see Hannah 2005. However, where one falls on this question does not necessarily matter to my argument and thus like Berger & Quinney (2005, p. 11), I am "content to live in the borderland between reality and our perceptions of it."

The same link between memory and storytelling holds true for collective identities and societal memories, as numerous scholars have demonstrated (e.g. DeLyser 2005; Lepore 1998; Duncan 1993). Just like individual identity, shared collective understandings are shaped by the stories and histories a culture, nation or group tells about itself. The stories and the way they are retold become much more important than any “objective” account of the events they recount. Indeed, it has been suggested that groups cease to exist as collective units once they lose their shared stories (Miheisah 1998, p. 27-36).

Scholarship on how (both individual and collective) identities are developed and maintained has also demonstrated that memories and identities are intimately related to associations with the physical locations where they are expressed and interacted (e.g. Robin 2007; Van Beuskom 2002; Feld & Basso 1996, p. 53-90; Schama 1995; Cronon 1983). To put it simply, stories are told in places. This suggests that place-meanings should be thought of as a particular kind of collective story or collective memory, intimately related with but not identical to collective identities.

The idea of place, what place-meanings are, how they come about, and how they relate to stories are questions that form the focus of a long and large geography literature (e.g. Feld & Basso 1996; Harvey 1996; Massey 1994; Duncan & Ley 1993; Tuan 1977; also see Cresswell 2004). Given my perspective on stories and their role in determining how we act in the world, I argue place-meanings should be seen as a collective story or memory of land. In my conception, places are formed from composites of stories associated with a given physical location. Stories, memories, and associations form place-meanings, which take tangible form in human-influenced landscapes. This thesis understands place as formed from multiple stories describing a certain landscape. Through narrative, people are expressing how they believe that land should be used (or not used). I use the phrase a *geography of stories* to describe the sedimentary layers of stories that contribute to the formation of a given place-meaning.

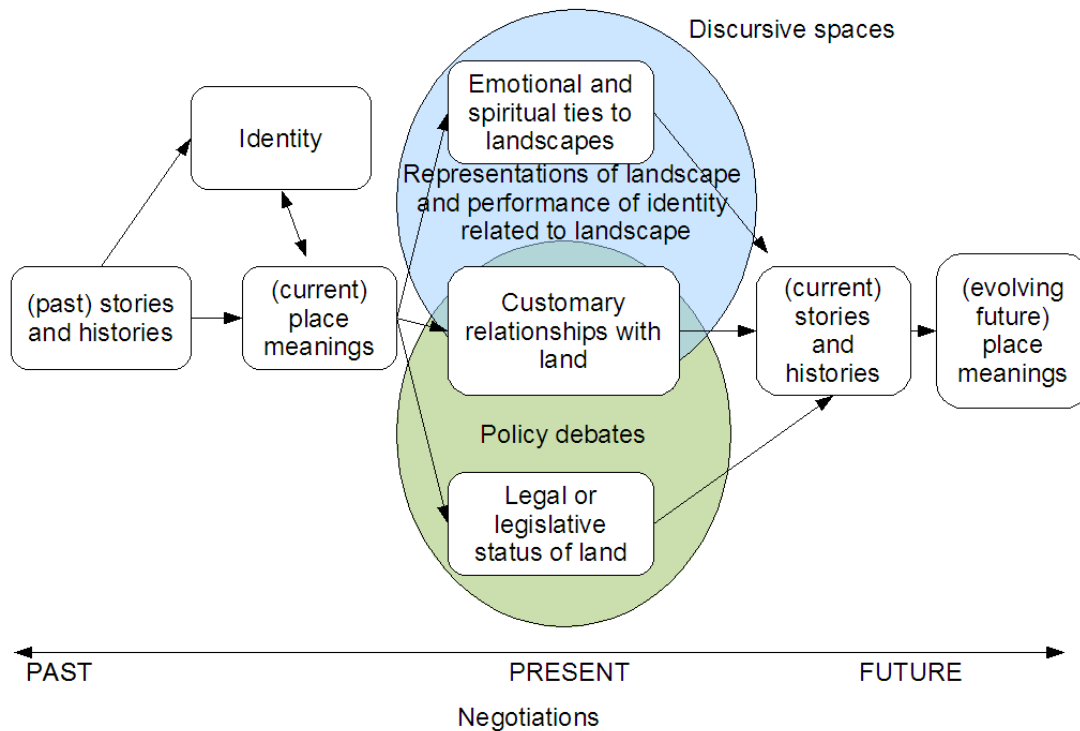
Speaking of a geography of stories highlights that place-meanings are neither static nor fixed. Rather, they vary through time and they change depending on scale and location in space. In this dynamic conception of place, my work echoes Doreen Massey (1993; 1994). However, to speak of

layers of stories in a given location also highlights how much past stories (and the physical landscape they helped shape) influenced the constellation of current place-meanings.

One of the persistent projects of environmental historians and historical geographers has been to understand the specific mechanisms by which stories are translated through decisions about land use into physical environments. William Cronon's 1992 article was an early effort in this larger ongoing project of theorizing the dynamic processes by which stories shape the world and the world gives rise to new stories. Another important insight on the nature of this interaction is found in Richard White's work on the way labour translates meaning into physical reality (White 1995). Similarly, Cronon's earlier *Changes in the Land* demonstrated how early English colonists in New England remade the landscape to suit their conceptions and thus made the world of the native peoples physically disappear (Cronon 1983). In a New Zealand context, the authors in *Environmental Histories of New Zealand* examine multiple facets of the same remaking of the landscape to fit cultural conceptions, including burning bush, creating European gardens and draining swamps (Pawson & Brooking 2002). Other historians have focused on how law and legislation translates stories and meanings into enforceable policies that determine the action of government (e.g. Jacoby 2001).

My understanding of the iterative way stories and place-meanings are translated into landscapes is expressed in Figure 2.1. Figure 2.1 provides a model for thinking about this complex set of dynamic processes that happen over time. Movement through time, represented by the horizontal time axis of the model, should not be taken to mean the process is linear. Rather, it is meant to emphasize the insight of theorists such as Foucault (1977) that structures constructed in the past become inflexible and real, thus constraining the range of future actions and conceptions in ways that may later be challenged but which continue to resonate. The model uses boxes to represent stories and place-meanings and the way they evolve over time. We begin with "(past) stories and histories," representing the myriad ways that a given location has been portrayed in past narratives.

Figure 2.1: The Iterative Process of Storytelling & Place-making through Time



These past stories and histories taken together shape current place-meanings. (Of course, the model only pictures one revolution of a cyclical process. Those past stories themselves were formed from the earlier working of the same general process of being inscribed on land.) Current place-meanings in turn work within discursive spaces to influence the real world through the processes of law and labour described above, represented by the three boxes in the middle of the model. The first, “emotional and spiritual ties to landscape,” refers to the intangible but real “sense of place” certain people develop in relation to certain landscapes. The second box labelled “customary relations with land” draws on White’s work, suggesting that place-meanings influence the kinds of labour people view as appropriate (or not appropriate) in a given landscape. In other words, place-meanings are responsible for conceptions of certain land as farmland or housing estate or recreation park and the subsequent absence or presence of certain material activities that happen there. Finally, the third box represents legal definitions of land use or policy legislation that come about when current place-meanings are articulated through political or legal processes.

Thus current place-meanings define the set of future possibilities for land use policy. Through these mechanisms – peoples’ sense of place, their customary way of physically relating to land through their labour, and the legal or legislative status of land – place-meanings influence the kind of stories that are told about that location in the present. As the cycle repeats, these current stories and histories will in turn shape future place-meanings.

The top left of the model has a box labelled identity, with arrows representing its relationship to both past stories and current place-meanings. This box symbolizes the variety of ways that understandings of land are interrelated to peoples’ understandings of race, gender, class, nationality and other categories. This box represents the variety of relationships between land and identity that were discussed above. The extent to and ways in which identities are co-constructed with place-meanings varies by person, culture, historical era, and location. These considerations will be mentioned wherever relevant throughout the thesis, but the diverse ways identity plays into stories about land and the meanings of places are simply too complex to represent in a model of the general case.

Stories as Influenced by Power-geometries Between Storytellers

Stories therefore possess real power to influence the world, but they are not entities with agency of their own. Stories are narratives that are told and retold by human storytellers to human listeners. Those human storytellers narrate from within societies, within cultures, within families. Berger & Quinney (2005, p. 5) summarize: “Storytelling does not occur in a social vacuum. It requires listeners who may validate or reject our stories or require us to accommodate our stories to theirs.” Since narration happens within a specific (if ever-changing) social context, stories can never be separated from the experiences, perspectives, values, and biases of those who narrate. Similarly, stories are understood differently by those who hear, see, or read the ways they are represented.

Within these specific social contexts, storytellers do not all possess equal status. They will both have variable access to the tools of storytelling as well as having variable degrees of convergence

between their world view and the dominant one. Doreen Massey speaks of power-geometries as a way of characterizing the differing degrees of power possessed by different agents and their variable ability to influence events or even control their own destinies (Massey 1993; see also Massey 1994). She describes the way power is distributed unequally within societies in fluid, ever-changing, but powerful constellations. What this emphasizes here is that stories can also never be isolated from the social relations of power that influenced the perspectives of their tellers. Thus to fully understand an individual's story, one must also understand something of their societal, cultural, and historic context.

The importance of considering power-geometries is even more acute when considering collective stories than individual ones. Like individual stories, the stories told by a nation, culture, or group serve to transmit and express a sense of group identity. However, collective stories do not have a readily identifiable teller. Rather, they are formed from the cacophony of many individual voices. For each teller, their way of telling the collective story is the truest version, reflecting as it does their view of the world. Berger & Quinney paraphrase John Paul Sarte to explain the tension between the positionality of the storyteller and the fact that s/he is a product of their historical context: "I am the universal singular, universalizing in my singularity the crisis and experiences of my historical epoch" (Berger & Quinney 2005, p. 8).

Power-geometries provide a way of understanding how this tension between *my* story and *our* story is resolved. In telling collective stories, the respective power of storytellers influences which stories emerge as dominant, which narratives are marginalized but present in discourse that "talks back" to the dominant one, and which stories are erased or forgotten. Depending on the specific type of storytelling and community being considered, this process of jockeying for power can be more or less conscious. However explicit the political process of contestation though, the interaction and aggregation of individual stories and understandings into collective stories that form cultural memory needs to be understood as a process of negotiation happening within specific geometries of power.

Returning to my conception of place-meanings as geographies of stories, this suggests power-geometries are as central to understanding geographies of stories as any other geography that Massey considers. As layers of stories are placed on landscapes, political negotiations happen within discursive spaces where power determines which stories will be expressed and codified in land use

decisions, individual “sense of place” feelings, and/or legal decisions. Given the different stories and positionality of storytellers, understanding the evolution of place-meanings requires understanding the power-geometries between storytellers and how these power-geometries influence storytelling processes.

A number of insights follow from emphasizing how the specific power relations between storytellers in a given time and location influence the geography of stories that comprises place-meanings in that era and place. First, storytelling must be understood as a political action with real policy consequences. Given the power of stories to shape reality, those with greater power to tell stories within a society also have greater influence in negotiations over the society’s collective understandings of place. Greater influence in determining place-meanings thus represents greater ability to influence land use through legal decisions and/or policies about the customary use of land.

Second, since storytelling is a political action, the processes whereby many individual stories are incorporated (or silenced) into collective stories and place-meanings should be understood as political negotiations. In Figure 2.1, this process of negotiation through time is represented as horizontal movement between stories and place-meanings that happens iteratively through time. The blue and green circles in the model, labelled “representations of landscape” and “policy debate” are meant to call attention to the various discursive spaces where this negotiation over stories plays out. Past stories and the current understandings of place they comprise are the narrative inputs into negotiations between storytellers. These negotiations certainly happen in formal political contexts such as Parliamentary debates. They also occur in other less formal spaces where identity and understandings of land are portrayed through storytelling, for instance in media coverage, literature, and Department of Conservation interpretation materials.

Thus histories and stories cannot be separated from the power differentials between storytellers that influence how they are told. Every individual tells particular stories based where they are situated culturally, geographically, and historically. These stories sit in space, interacting with one another to form the geography of stories associated with a particular physical location. Power-geometries between storytellers shape the relative influence of stories within that geography. Through processes of political negotiation and contestation, certain stories become dominant. Which stories are

told collectively and dominate the others at any given time and location give clues about the underlying dominance of different storytellers.

However, power-geometries are fluid. In order to maintain their power, these geometries must be constantly re-enacted. As a result, storytellers must re-produce and re-present their stories through time. Dominant or collective stories are constantly being challenged and renegotiated. Since stories are specific to time, location, and culture, negotiation over stories may manifest in evolving stories through time, variations in stories in space, or differences in stories between cultures.

Reflecting Reality: Representations of Stories as Method

Despite their real power in the world, stories are not tangible objects that one can directly grasp and hold onto. Rather these narrative ways of knowing can only be glimpsed obliquely through the texts and other representations they inspire. By implication, individual and collective identities and place-meanings are only knowable through the representations used to express them. At the same time, stories maintain their power by being continually re-presented; identities and place-meanings must be continually re-produced and re-enacted.

However, these representations – whether in words, images, or speech – should not be taken to be identical to the stories they represent, as much scholarship on “texts” seems to implicitly suggest (Hay 2000, p. 122-143). Narratives and stories are a means by which our brains make sense of the world. Closely linked to memory, they are mental and emotional processes that simultaneously shape and reflect our understanding of ourselves, our communities, and the places we inhabit. In making this argument, I follow but also depart from arguments about texts made by other scholars. I understand written texts and pictures as manifestations or representations of a story. In my conception, much scholarship about texts gives them too much agency. Texts do not act in the world. Rather, they express or reflect narrative habits of mind that shape how people act in the world.

This raises the question of how to analyze or understand these narrative habits of mind. In the case of individual stories and memories, there is a fairly isomorphic relationship between stories and

their representation, although the literature on memory and memoir suggests that representations of individual identity are fluid and performed over time. Collective stories are even harder to grasp, since we can know collective stories only through representations produced by individuals and shaped by the power-geometries in which they are created. Like the old cliché of people feeling parts of an elephant, we analyse collective stories by aggregating those of individuals. The literature on text and representation is thus quite useful in addressing the question of how to study collective stories and place-meanings. By analyzing representations produced by storytellers for their implicit assumptions using textual analysis or discourse analysis techniques, we can start to grasp the stories their creators use to understand the world (Hay 2000, p. 122-143).

Representations of the narratives that form our understanding of place-meanings come in a variety of forms, including written, oral, and visual. These diverse representations – including photographs, legislative documents, letters to the editor, oral histories, etc. – provide a lens to “see” peoples’ understanding of a given location. By looking at the representations different storytellers produce and specifically at the assumptions and silences within them, we can analyze the different associations of place they hold, associations which are expressed and understood in their minds and hearts through stories. Since storyteller power underlies negotiation over collective stories, representations of place-meanings must also be considered in light of the power-geometries that shaped their creation.

Textual analysis techniques applied to representations of place allow us to see the constitutive narrative elements of geographies of stories. In a metaphoric sense, close reading of representations of landscape allows us to describe and “map” the stories that comprise a place’s meaning in a given group, culture, or society. Once we have mapped the range of narratives, the distribution of stories and their relation to one another can be analysed and explained by looking at the workings of power in the storytelling processes that created them. Like place-meanings and narrative understandings about land, power-geometries between storytellers are not easy to see directly. Thus analysing a geography of stories requires analyzing not only the perspectives of its layers of stories but also relating silences and absences in those stories to the differing influence of storytellers. Assessing texts

or representations in this way allows reconstruction of the political negotiation and contestation of collective stories over time that are expressed in representations from different eras.

In Figure 2.1, the blue-green spaces are not just sites where meaning is negotiated. These discursive spaces also represent areas where this whole iterative process can be seen, grasped, studied and analysed. For example, parliamentary debates represent on the one hand the contestation of future meaning over a piece of land. At the same time, these policy debates provide a site to trace the interaction of stories with differing power describing that land in the present and thus analyze present understandings of that place.

In summary, stories not only shape reality but also are expressed in representations that reflect how people understand that reality. Representations of stories serve as windows into identity and collective stories because they suggest how people understand themselves. In the case of collective stories, representations produced by various individuals and their interaction with one another also serve as a window into processes of political negotiation over cultural stories. Thus analysis of how stories are re-presented and the political contexts that shape that representation forms the centre of my method in this thesis, a method that is treated in more detail in the next chapter.

Academic Research as Storytelling

These arguments also apply to academic narratives (Berger & Quinney 2005; Etherington 2004; Hay 2000, p. 161-182). One of the main strands linking various post-modern scholars together is the assumption – contrary to an older view – that the researcher never brings total objectivity to his/her research. As post-positivist and post-structuralist techniques have been applied to the research process itself, any given piece of academic research has come to be seen as a product of its author/researcher/storyteller just the same as any other piece of discourse. In post-colonial scholarship including my own, this way of understanding research has been explicitly political, providing a way to challenge discourses of universal truth that have long been held and re-produced by those in positions

of power (Tuhiwai Smith 1999; Mihesuah 1998). This recognition of academia as storytelling has two related implications for my work: writing as method and critical reflexivity.

Writing and storytelling as method fits within a larger narrative trend in history and other social science. Since the 1973 publication of Hayden White's *Metahistory* and the so-called linguistic turn that recognized the power of language to influence reality, historians have widely (though not universally) come to view the practice of academic history as a particular form of storytelling (White 1973). Even earlier historians implicitly acknowledge the role of author in history writing; historiography is based on the assumption that authors' historical contexts shape the histories written in any given era. The William Cronon article (1992) mentioned above fits within this larger trend. Specifically addressing the relationship between nature and stories, Cronon argues that we should view the writing of academic history as an act of storytelling. Using the Dust Bowl to demonstrate how plot and setting changes can produce drastically different accounts of the same past events, Cronon urges environmental historians to be attentive to these elements of story. This same link between academic history writing and storytelling is found in the form of history books, which often make use of the distinctly literary form of prologues and epilogues.

I was trained to conceive and practice history in the way Cronon describes. From this starting point comes my conception of writing this thesis as storytelling. Given a variety of my own experiences, observations in the archives, oral history interview conversations, and reading of other academic literature, I have produced a narrative account of how I understand the processes, relationships, and contradictions I have encountered. Given the insights of indigenous scholars (e.g. Tuhiwai Smith 1999; Mihesuah 1998) as well as my own understanding of how stories are mediated by power, I am also aware of my own power-geometry in relation to telling this story and how it potentially shapes my narration.

If academic research is just another story, however, what differentiates one history from another, let alone from a popular history account of the same events? How do academic storytellers ensure their stories are as rigorous as possible in their search for understanding? It was just these questions that led to Cronon's article. That work came about as he grappled with how environmental history could make use of the insights of postmodernism without being lost in the sea of fluid

unmoored relativity that is potentially the logical extension of certain arguments about power and representation (Patai & Corral 2005). His answer was to focus on the community of scholars within which academic knowledge is produced. Others have argued that the responsibility of historians is to present as many versions of past as possible without judging (Miheusuah 1998, p. 23-26).

For me, writing this thesis, engaged in generalizing historiography and making it useful outside of the boundaries of history territory, these answers are both more and less satisfactory than in an environmental history context. On the one hand, given that questions of place-meaning are often interdisciplinary, thinking of academic research as storytelling provides a way to analyse the narrative perspective and impact of work in disciplines like tourism studies alongside other accounts from other disciplines and from the wider society. On the other hand, this reliance on sharing a framework with others presents certain challenges when doing work outside clean disciplinary boundaries, where the community of interested scholars is less defined and not always speaking the same language.

This Thesis: Telling Stories about Stories

In the course of writing this thesis at the geography-history border, I myself grappled with the question Cronon and others have posed: how to ensure that the thesis is as rigorous an account as possible and that its conclusions represent a well-thought-out truth about stories while remaining conscious that my account is not the only possible one. The answer that I settled on follows what Iain Hay (2000, p. 23-36) terms critical reflexivity and Berger & Quinney (2005, p. 6-8) refer to simply as humbleness. Throughout the thesis, I have attempted to remain conscious of myself as the person behind the research and how my specific experiences have shaped the story (Etherington 2004). I have also made these connections transparent in the text where appropriate in order to help the reader spot any inconsistencies, biases, or absences that exist because of my specific perspective on my topic. This approach follows logically from what I argued about stories in the abstract case throughout this chapter i.e. that fully understanding them requires knowing something about the storytelling context that produced them.

The other implication of viewing academia as storytelling is that it changes one's understanding of what a methodology is. Garman & Piantanida distinguish between two types of methodology in *The Authority to Imagine*. One focuses on what you do, the other on how you persuade others to accept your truth-claims about a subject (Garman & Piantanida 2006, p. 1-18). Throughout this thesis, my overarching methodology for persuading others of my conclusions is the narrative structure of the thesis itself, which tells a story of my own research journey and how I answered the questions I began with. That research journey consisted of a number of methods in the other sense of what I exactly did to reach my conclusions. I narrate the specifics of these mixed qualitative methods in the following chapter.

In this chapter, I have presented the theory of stories that was the end result of my inquiry into the role of pristine in New Zealand and my deeper reflection on the nature of stories' relationship to land use. In explaining my theory of stories, I have argued for the centrality of narrative as well as for being aware of how storyteller power-geometries shape how stories are told and understood. I used my model (Figure 2.1) to tell a visual story about the iterative relationship between collective stories about land (i.e. place-meanings) and land use decisions, emphasizing the importance of understanding stories for understanding the environmental policy choices societies make. I introduced my conceptualization of place as a geography of stories. I suggested we study place-meanings by uncovering layers of stories and relating them to their storytellers' temporal, spatial, and cultural positions. I then argued that the same approaches and methods we apply to other stories can and must be applied to academic research, whether it is past or current, from our own cultures or others'. Similarly, as researchers we have responsibility to be reflective about our own research stories and how they are shaped by us the storytellers.

The next chapter, Chapter 3, is the first of five chapters that describe how I moved from sitting on a plane in Los Angeles wondering about wilderness to sitting in an office in Christchurch writing the final draft of this thesis. It discusses my methodology in Garman and Piantanida's logistical sense. It provides the answer to a question a physical geography colleague asked me in the tea room one day after we were discussing the theoretical questions addressed in this chapter. "That's all fascinating," she said, "but how do you actually do that?" Chapter 3 explains my method and

introduces the Te Wāhipounamu South-West World Heritage Area, which serves as a specific case study to observe these more general relationships.

Chapter Three

A Geography of Stories in Southwest New Zealand

This chapter describes the ways I use mixed qualitative methods to metaphorically map a geography of stories and then to analyze how this geography developed over time. It introduces Te Wāhipounamu South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area, which serves as a case study to examine the impact of the ‘pristine’ story on New Zealand conservation land as well as to illustrate the broader theoretical relationships between history, identity, place-meanings, and land use explored in Chapter 2. I present the range of stories which underlie contemporary understandings of this area as a protected landscape for recreation and tourism. I then explain my methodology by describing how I identified and analyzed this range of stories. The movement between general and particular in this chapter’s narrative mirrors a movement in the thesis as a whole between two interwoven and inter-dependent stories, one theoretical and one specific to New Zealand.

Southwest New Zealand as Case Study

In March 2007 I set off to explore the South Island and find a particular place in which to investigate my broader questions. During the five days of my initial ‘fieldwork,’ I uneasily wore both my participant and observer hats (Massey 2003; also see Hay 2000, p. 103-121). As an American recently arrived in New Zealand, I was reacting to the majestic scenery like any other tourist. I stopped to take the iconic photographs, I took the same short walk to Fantail Falls on Haast Pass, I stayed at the same Queenstown backpackers. I even made the same driving mistakes, twice pulling out of car parks onto the right side of the road before quickly correcting myself. At the same time, I was observing the construction of the tourist experience. I not only photographed the views, but also the viewing platforms, remarking how strategic construction of pull-outs and overlooks has made New Zealand’s best panoramas accessible to the amateur photographer. I noticed the split in the track at Fantail Falls where the sign presented a choice between a momentary stopping experience or an

overnight tramping one: Fantail Falls (“5 minutes”) or Brewster Hut (“3 hours”). I listened to the conversations of travellers sharing my backpacker dorm rooms, sometimes writing down offhand comments which revealed their impressions of the landscape. As both participant and observer, I was encountering myriad representations of the landscape and reflexively watching those representations shape my slowly emerging understanding of the places I was moving through.

Leaving Christchurch, both my tourist and researcher selves were fairly oblivious to New Zealand geography. Regions and national parks and towns and topographical features blended in my head in a soup of exotic-looking names. In this state of geographical ignorance, each named place has as much meaning as another. Pukaki and Punakaiki and Mount Oxford sit next to Fiordland National Park and the Mackenzie Country and the Canterbury region, with no sense of scale or location. Similarly, one has little sense of which names belong to places with distinct identities, which are generalized groupings, or which have legal significance without signifying unique places in peoples’ collective memory. Among the many representations I had encountered before setting out into the landscape were numerous guidebooks and brochures geared towards international visitors. Amidst their references to names I could not quite pronounce and places I could not quite locate, I found frequent but passing references to the world heritage status of the southwest South Island.

To give just a few examples, DoC’s “Exploring Parks” pamphlet (2006b) describes Westland/Tai Poutini National Park as “a wonderful scenic landscape with World Heritage status.” Lonely Planet’s *Tramping in New Zealand Guide* (DuFresne 2002, p. 262) promotes West Coast recreational opportunities by explaining that it is “almost all wilderness” from “the end of the Heaphy Track down to the Southwest New Zealand (Te Wāhipounamu) World Heritage Area.” One of many such advertisements, Haast River Safari (n.d.) invites tourists to “join us on a river boat journey into the heart of Te Wāhipounamu – the South West World Heritage Area of New Zealand.” Similarly, literature for the guided Hollyford Track walk (n.d.) promises a trip through “the Hollyford Valley, internationally recognised as a place of outstanding natural values” that is “situated within Fiordland National Park which has been accorded World Heritage status.”

Mentions like these give the impression that Te Wāhipounamu is a coherent, distinct place, the kind one could find on any map and find easy information about visiting. Moving through the

physical landscape these documents interpret, however, I found few substantive mentions of world heritage in conversations, signage, pamphlets, or visitor centres. I observed passing references such as the name of the World Heritage Hotel in Haast, but I returned from five days of exploring national parks and Department of Conservation (DoC) visitor centres with little clear idea of the meaning of world heritage status in this area. Among the many pamphlets and displays describing the history of the conservation pioneers in the national parks or the geology of the alpine fault that formed the Southern Alps, the primary mention of Te Wāhipounamu in the DoC literature was the same small text box (Figure 3.1) that appears (with slight variations between conservancies) on numerous brochures. I found no explanations of why the boundaries of the world heritage area were drawn where they are nor any further explanation of the “world significance” of the area except for the references to Gondwanaland shown in Figure 3.1. Rather, I was left with a sense of paradox, that Te Wāhipounamu was an uneasy place, without a clearly defined cultural meaning, about which a range of sometimes conflicting stories are told.

Back in Christchurch, as I reflected on the vacuum of stories I had observed in what I had previously had believed was a distinct place, I started to ask why this vacuum existed and what this example could reveal about broader processes of place-making. These questions structured the design of my research and eventually this thesis, providing a lens to investigate how places acquire their meaning and how different stories about the same place interact. I decided to use the Te Wāhipounamu South-West New Zealand World Heritage area to define the boundaries of my case study site.



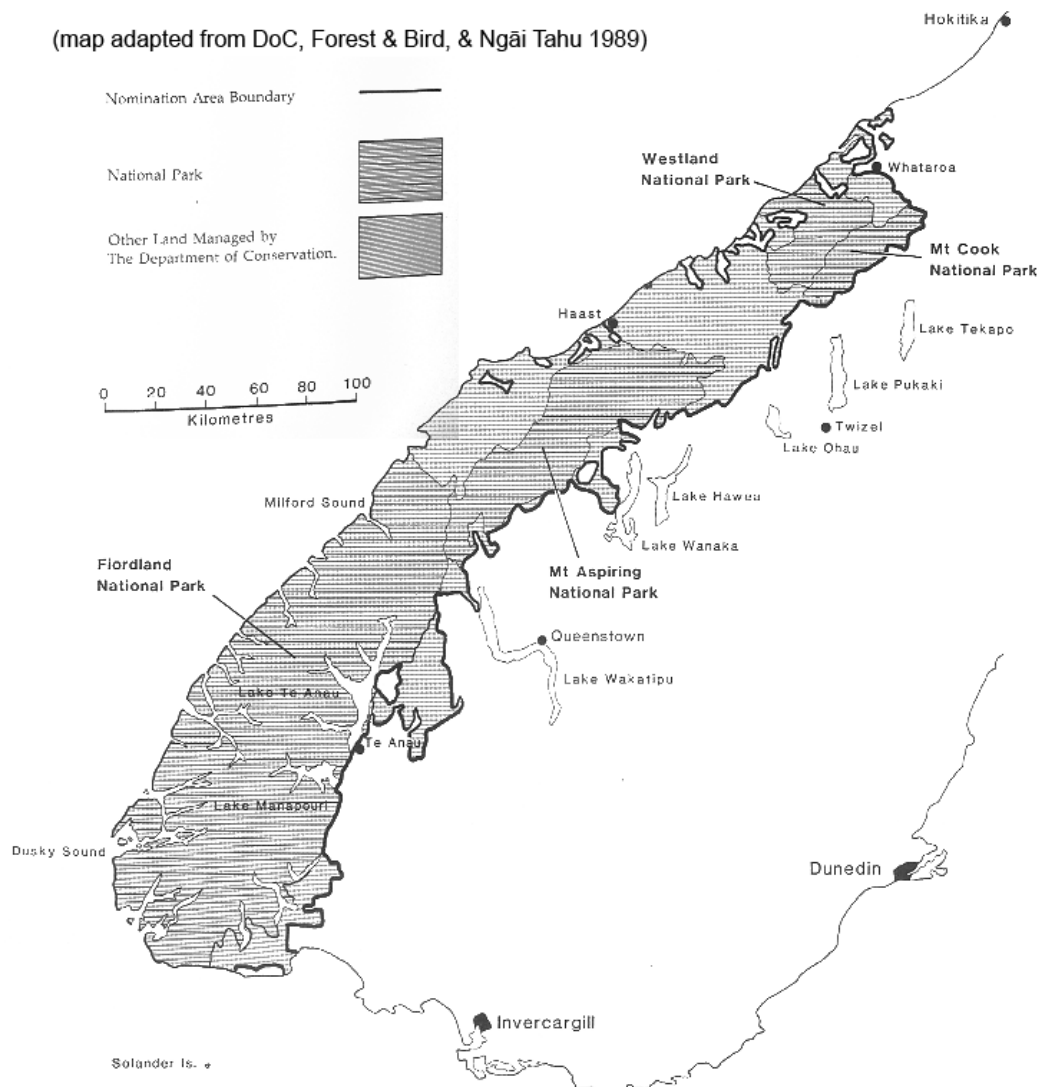
Figure 3.1: World Heritage Text Box on DoC Pamphlets

A Conventional Story of Te Wāhipounamu

Te Wāhipounamu World Heritage Area (Figure 3.2) comprises a tenth of New Zealand, including 2.6 million hectares of mountains, beech forest, and fiords in the southwest of the South Island. Its coordinate location is between longitudes 116° 26'E and 170° 40'E and latitudes 43°S and 46° 30'S (DoC, Forest & Bird, & Ngāi Tahu 1989, p. 3). As summarized in the brief description on UNESCO's online listing of sites, the landscape "has been shaped by successive glaciations into fiords, rocky coasts, towering cliffs, lakes and waterfalls. Two-thirds...is covered with southern beech and podocarps, some of which are over 800 years old. The kea, the only alpine parrot in the world,

Figure 3.2: Te Wāhipounamu South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area

(map adapted from DoC, Forest & Bird, & Ngāi Tahu 1989)



lives [in the area], as does the rare and endangered takahe, a large flightless bird” (UNESCO n.d., “Te Wāhipounamu”). The ICUN evaluator called it the “least disturbed” tenth of the nation’s land area (ICUN 1990, p. 42).

Aside from one small parcel that the Royal Forest & Bird Protection society owns near Martins Bay, the rest of the included area is part of the Crown’s conservation estate. The listed area is comprised of a “nearly contiguous network of reserved land...including four national parks (Fiordland, Mount Aspiring, Aoraki/Mount Cook and Westland/Tai Poutini), two nature reserves, three scientific reserves, 13 scenic reserves, four wildlife management reserves, five ecological areas, a number of conservation areas and one private reserve” (ICUN 1990, p. 1).

Gazetted under a variety of acts, these various reserved lands encompass 450 kilometres of coastline, with boundaries which stretch 40-90 kilometres inland. The area “consists essentially of a mountain barrier raised across the path of the prevailing westerly winds of the ‘Roaring Forties,’” setting up “dramatic climatic and ecological gradients from extensive rain forests in the coastal lowlands, to high mountains with large glaciers, to tussock grasslands of the relatively dry interior” (DoC, Forest & Bird, & Ngāi Tahu 1989, p. 6; also see Mark 1998).

Given the conservation status of the land, the main human use of the study site is for recreation and tourism purposes. Tourism is a vitally important industry in New Zealand, contributing around 10% of the country’s GDP and supporting one in ten jobs (Ministry of Tourism, n.d). Despite large numbers of self-drive travellers, tourists and domestic recreationalists today and in the past have tended to move around southwest New Zealand in fairly defined flow patterns such as Christchurch to Hokitika to Franz Josef or Milford to Te Anau to Queenstown. These flows are partially determined by available transportation options in a given era. Even today, there are only three roads crossing the Main Divide the length of the Southern Alps; there is literally one road from Haast to Wanaka or Te Anau to Milford Sound (Figure 3.3). Similarly, the comparatively late development of the glacier region was shaped by its remoteness at the end of the road, since the Haast Pass Highway road from the West Coast to Otago did not open until 1965. The same rugged topography shaping road-building causes human settlement to cluster along the strip of land between the Southern Alps and the Tasman Sea or around the large southern lakes. The mountains themselves remain sparsely populated and

This map illustrates the road network and major towns of the South Island of New Zealand. The island is shown in a light grey tone, with the Tasman Sea to the west and the South Pacific Ocean to the east. Major towns are marked with black dots and labeled in bold capital letters. The road network is depicted with black lines, and major roads are numbered with black numbers. The map includes the following towns and locations: Collingwood, Takahā, Motueka, Woodstock, Nelson, Picton, Karamea, Kohatu, Richmond, Blenheim, Seddon, Westport, Reefton, Springs Junction, Hanmer Springs, Lake Rotorua, Lake Rototiti, Clarendon, Kaitake, Greymouth, Sillwater, Oira, Athurs Pass, Waiapa, Dunrobin, Rangiora, Amberley, Hokitika, Ross, Springfield, Darfield, Rolleston, Christchurch, Akaroa, Rakaia, Leeston, Ashburton, Rakaia River, Methven, Mt Somers, Fairlie, Winchester, Timaru, Pleasant Point, Twizel, Omarama, Kurow, Waimate, Dunrobin, Pukeuri, Dargaville, Queenstown, Cromwell, Clyde, Alexandra, Middlemarch, Roxburgh, Lumsden, Tapanui, Lawrence, Milford Sound, Lake Wanaka, Lake Hawea, Wanaka, Lake Wakatipu, Kingston, Lake Te Anau, Te Anau, Manapouri, Nightcaps, Riverside, Gore, Winton, Mataura, Clinton, Kaitangata, Otago, Invercargill, Riverton, Bluff, and Half Moon Bay. The map also shows the Tasman Sea, South Pacific Ocean, and Stewart Island.

In using these huts and tracks or tramping in forests with controlled deer populations, recreationalists rely on roads to trailheads, shops to buy provisions, petrol stations, and DoC offices to

buy hut passes. Similarly, conservation officers rely on facilities located in towns to purchase and store equipment, maintain vehicles, or interact with other staff in DoC offices. Thus when appropriate my analysis also includes nearby towns such as Te Anau that serve as gateways to the World Heritage Area. While technically these gateway towns are not part of the world heritage listing, they are essential to human experience in and perception of this place.

Te Wāhipounamu World Heritage Area was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1990 as a natural site of global significance under all four of the natural site criteria:

“(vii) to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;

(viii) to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;

(ix) to be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;

(x) to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation” (UNESCO 2005)

Under these criteria, the story of Te Wāhipounamu's global natural significance is narrated in UNESCO documents with reference to ancient flora, fauna, and topography linking the present coastal strip with the ancient super continent of Gondwanaland. ICUN's evaluation of the nomination (1990, p. 44) explains: “South West New Zealand contains the best modern representation of the ancient flora and fauna of Gondwanaland. These include some 14 species of podocarp, genera of beech, flightless kiwis, ‘bush’ moas and carnivorous *Powelliphanta* land snails. There is also abundant evidence of the Pleistocene glacial and inter-glacial periods in the landforms, distribution of flora and fauna and the marine terraces in the south.” Additional explanations of the natural values describe the area as the last habitat of endangered species such as the takahe, a place of rugged beauty, and the site of one of only three major tectonic faults in the world located on land (ICUN 1990, p. 44).

Thus my study area is an area defined by international criteria as a pristine landscape. Though there is significant human activity within and around it, the modern customary relationships of people

in this place are centred on recreation and tourism activities seen as being compatible with the relatively untouched character of these protected lands.

Advantages and Limitations of Te Wāhipounamu as Case Study

Its global recognition as pristine, its domestic legal status as conservation land, and its use for nature-based tourist and recreation activities make Te Wāhipounamu an exemplary site to examine the contribution of the pristine story to place-making in New Zealand. My paradoxical observation that the official world heritage story does not necessarily determine how this place is understood points to an ideal opportunity to investigate how place-meanings are constantly negotiated from multiple stories.

Te Wāhipounamu has several advantages as a site for examining negotiated place meanings over time. First, its recent global recognition (accepted to the World Heritage List in 1989) facilitated my reconstruction of the nomination process while also allowing consideration of the subsequent consequences of overlaying world heritage status on existing stories. Second, as Department of Conservation land, Te Wāhipounamu is managed by an agency also responsible for protecting and interpreting cultural and historic heritage. This potential conflict between global and domestic storytelling provides an interesting opportunity to examine the broader conservation project in New Zealand. Similarly, the ease of accessing public records created by storytellers makes DoC a practical site for researching how stories vary over time. Most importantly, the area collectively listed as Te Wāhipounamu comprises a patchwork of lands with diverse histories of use and domestic legal status. Similarly, different portions of the world heritage area are managed by four different DoC conservancies (Canterbury, Otago, Southland and West Coast), each with its own procedures and priorities. This mosaic of variables allowed plenty of possibility for comparing and contrasting to tease out which factors determine how place-meanings evolve. An additional benefit is that the world heritage area as a whole has not attracted much attention from social scientists or theorists of place, with the important exception of Kirby (1997). Studies that do exist have tended to focus on parts of

the world heritage area as representative of the whole rather than explicitly comparing within the entire listed area (e.g. White 1994 on Aoraki/Mount Cook).

The world heritage status of the area provides a fairly objective legally-defined boundary and significant benefits for tracing interactions between history, conservation policy, and storytelling. However, by limiting my analysis to the area listed on the World Heritage List in 1989, I have defined my study in a way that privileges the role of pristine stories, as illustrated by the ‘conventional story’ above. Had I defined the case study differently (e.g. Southland), I would have focused on a different set of stories and introduced the place using a different ‘conventional story’. Given that how something is named influences how it is understood, choices about how to define and name a case study necessarily influence the resulting research story (Hay 2000, p. 41-46; also see Pyrke Rose & Whatmore 2003, p. 9-46).

Layers of Names, Layers of Stories

Because language and stories simultaneously shape and reflect reality, the way we name places impacts how we understand them. Place names are the simplest way to reference or represent a particular story about land. While the tie between stories and place-names has most often received attention from scholars of non-Western cultures (e.g. Basso 1996), the same holds true for naming in contemporary settler societies (e.g. Dominy 2001, p. 137-163). If place is space given meaning by stories, naming is one specific way meaning is inscribed on space (Byrnes 2002; Berg and Kearns 1996).

Like other kinds of identity, the meaning of places is defined by the establishment of boundaries that differentiate one place from another with a different name. In writing this thesis, I struggled to find a shorthand way to refer to my study area. I could not use synonyms like district, nation, or park since the world heritage nomination was the original source of stories uniting this vast tenth of New Zealand’s land area. In this text I resorted to alternating between geographical

description (“southwest New Zealand”), the self-referential “my study site,” or the unwieldy proper name (which I have often abbreviated to “Te Wāhipounamu” for brevity’s sake).

The geographic area I am examining does not have any other name that uniquely identifies it apart from the one - Te Wāhipounamu (South West New Zealand) World Heritage Area – laid out in the 1989 proposal (Kirby 1997, p. 259). The name Te Wāhipounamu is Māori, meaning “place of the greenstone,” and closely related to Te Wai Pounamu (“waters of greenstone”), the name of the entire South Island. Before 1989, however, Te Wāhipounamu never referred exclusively to the part of New Zealand described in the listing. Māori do not seem to have had a name for the exact area which now has world heritage status, although Sir Tipene O’Regan mentions Te Whakatakanga o Te Karehu o Tamatea as a name for the Fiordland area (O’Regan 1989, p. 245; also see McKinnon 1997, Plate 26). Within Pakeha traditions there similarly was no pre-existing name for this portion of New Zealand, which is largely comprised of lands left over after more productive lands were settled and named by European colonists. The lack of an obvious name makes clear Te Wāhipounamu (South West New Zealand) World Heritage Area was identified and categorized in the process of achieving world heritage status; the boundaries defined by the 1989 listing were culturally artificial. By defining my case study using this name, I am thus emphasizing the particular story of global pristine significance this name references and potentially obscuring other stories referenced by different names.

Like any representation of stories, names influence identity and land use. As the example of Te Wāhipounamu illustrates, naming places and placing names on a map are part of the process of constructing and re-producing stories about places. Giselle Byrnes (2002, p. 18) hints at this link between narrative, naming, and mapping in a New Zealand context when she defines place names as “human impressions on land” and presents land as “palimpsest, comprising a series of cultural landscapes laid over one another, forming a kind of linguistic montage”. Referencing Johannes Anderson’s work on place names on Banks Peninsula, Byrnes sees maps as names laid on space to create “not a static artefact, but a dynamic and living text that spoke of historical characters with activity and life...the record of lived experience.”

Place-names and maps, then, form a starting point for identifying and understanding the geography of stories that underlies a given place meaning. Byrnes (2002, p. 18) proposes we read

“land as a text, where the names inscribed on it are considered as artefacts, remnants and ruins of past places, people and occasions.” While I agree that names reference the past, I propose to read land as text by treating place-names as shorthand references for past and present stories, histories, or narratives about land. In a similar fashion, Berg & Kearns’ (1996, p. 103) point that names have both the power to signify and constitute reality mirrors my conception that stories referenced by particular names both shape and reflect place-meanings.

Thinking of place-names as signifiers for stories about land and identity hints at the role of power in naming and mapping. Both Byrnes as well as Berg & Kearns explicitly focus on the politics of naming whereby certain names are given legitimacy based on the power of those whose views they encode. This process is analogous to the storytelling negotiations that I am exploring in this thesis. Place-names then become a contested discursive site, where the colonial power of Pakeha men was (and through ongoing “cultural colonization” is) normalized but also where the struggle for post-colonial understandings are played out (Berg & Kearns 1996; see also White 1994; Yoon 1986 p. 98-118). Political considerations even influence which name comes first in the case of dual names such as Aoraki/Mt Cook or Westland/Tai Poutini, since the name after the slash has a tendency to eventually fall out of common usage.

Names – either placed spatially onto maps or else continuously re-presented in everyday writing and speech – provide an entry point to map a geography of stories in a given location. Names are especially useful in analyzing dominant stories, since the winners of negotiations over land use and meaning often also win the right to determine which name is used for a place. By drawing boundaries in changing ways that reference evolving stories, different names suggest fluid conceptions of place. Various names for a place suggest different components of the area’s meaning and reference different layers within its geography of stories.

Table 3.1: A Geography of Stories in Southwest New Zealand

Names or general category label for the case study area	Physical area this name refers to	Story referenced by this way of naming	Implications of story for land use/non-use	Examples of representations of this story	Examples of academic analysis of this story
Te Wahipounamu (South West New Zealand) World Heritage Area	Entire case study area (because case study was defined by this name)	The area is one of the world's best examples of flora and fauna dating from Gondwanaland. It is part of the heritage of all people, not just New Zealanders	Any use of the area should not threaten these global natural values. Land should be managed to protect them as needed (e.g. pest control)	DoC, Forest & Bird & Ngāi Tahu 1989; Royal Forest & Bird Protection 1987	Chapter 4; Kirby 1997
Fiordland National Park, Aoraki/Mount Cook NP, Westland/Tai Poutini NP, Mt. Aspiring NP, component reserve names e.g. Ramparts Scientific Reserve, Lake Moeraki Scenic Reserve, (general category) Conservation estate	Department of Conservation land as gazetted under various legislation	The location is part of the cultural, natural, and/or historic heritage of New Zealanders. Specific stories reference pioneer legacy, indigenous species, glaciation, etc.	The area should be managed to preserve and protect this heritage, but used by humans to the extent such use is compatible with preservation.	Conservation Act 1987; National Park Act 1980; General Policy for National Parks 2005 (National Conservation Authority 2005); DoC interpretation materials	Chapter 5
Te Waka-o-Aoraki, Te Waipounamu	Entire South Island	Ngāi Tahu holds manawhenua in the area. Their ancestors have been using its resources for a thousand years.	Ngāi Tahu have a special relationship to the land. They should have a say in decisions about its use.	Waitangi Tribunal 1991	Chapter 6
West Coast, Canterbury, Otago, Southland	Land under the jurisdiction of these four regions	The land is a resource to be utilized as needed for peoples' sake. It is part of a modern society. E.g. the roads in this area are ones that people drive through to live their lives, conduct business, move goods, etc.	The regional councils have the power to maintain roads and manage resources as needed for the benefit of their constituencies.	Resource Management Act 1991; Resource consent submissions	Memon & Perkins 2000; Scott 1995

Names or general category label for the case study area	Physical area this name refers to	Story referenced by this way of naming	Implications of story for land use/non-use	Examples of representations of this story	Examples of academic analysis of this story
Milford Sound, Fox Glacier, etc. (general category) Tourist playground	Land where tourist activities take place	The land is an economic resource to support tourism, New Zealand's number one foreign export earner	Natural values should be protected because and to the extent to which they are necessary to maintain tourism revenues.	Colmar Brunton 2003; <i>The Press</i> business section; Tourist business advertising	Cloke & Perkins 1998
(general category) New Zealand iconic landscape	Various sites that have come to represent New Zealand identity e.g. Aoraki/Mt Cook, Milford Sound, etc.	These areas are quintessentially New Zealand. They are symbols of national identity and represent New Zealand to the rest of the world.	These areas must be protected as symbols of national identity	Air New Zealand boarding video; Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre at the Hermitage	Nicolas Lewis on Brand NZ (forthcoming Marsden grant research)
(general category) Pristine nature, wilderness	Most of New Zealand's landscapes that have not been significantly modified	Nature in New Zealand is special and should be protected for its own sake. New Zealand is distinct in its diversity of ecosystems and species (many of them endemic)	These areas must be protected for their own intrinsic value.	Forest & Bird 1987	Park 2006
Valley and track names e.g. Rees-Dart (general category) Recreation land	Any land used for recreation, particularly backcountry areas with huts and tramping tracks	These landscapes are part of New Zealand's heritage because they provide the opportunity for the character-shaping outdoor experiences that urban Kiwis otherwise would not have.	Land should be preserved in natural state but recreation activities such as tramping, fishing, etc. should be allowed and provided with adequate facilities.	Federated Mountain Clubs <i>Bulletin</i>	Booth & Cullen 2001
(general category) Home to specific type of New Zealander	Gateway towns or rural stations where people live	"This is home. This is where I grew up. This is where my family roots are. This is where I feel an emotional connection to the landscape."	Land policies need to recognize the needs and desires of the local communities.	Essay on Okarito in Hulme & Morrison 1989; Author's conversations with residents of Te Anau and Franz Josef	Dominy 2001

A Geography of Stories in Southwest New Zealand

Place-names, then, form a starting point for identifying the stories underlying the current pristine conception of southwest New Zealand. Table 3.1 presents this range of stories. Given the impossibility of exhaustively identifying all stories associated with an area, it is intended to be illustrative rather than comprehensive. In the first four rows, I use the various ways my study area can or has been named to convey the range of stories I found in representations using these names. However, not every narrative about a given place is referenced by a distinct name. Instead, stories about a place may be associated with a general category of land present in broader cultural narratives. The later rows of Table 3.1 use such general category labels to identify some of the broader cultural stories which also influence how this part of New Zealand is understood. Table 3.1 thus metaphorically maps the geography of stories that underlies understanding of the area as a pristine site for conservation, recreation, and tourism.

“How Do You Actually Do That?”: Thesis Methodology

Mapping the geography of stories that underlies a given place meaning as I did for southwest New Zealand in Table 3.1 requires performing two distinct sets of activities. Analyzing how that geography of stories developed over time as I do in the rest of this thesis requires two additional sets of activities. Note I deliberately avoid calling these activities “steps” since “step one, step two” implies a linear process. Instead, these sets of activities should be seen as components of what psychologists term heuristic inquiry, with greater understanding emerging from repetitive cycles of questioning, analysis, and reflection (Garman & Piantanida 2006, p. 35-48; see also Douglass & Moustakas 1985). Table 3.2 explains how these activities correspond to the questions my thesis asks.

Table 3.2: Thesis Methodology

Theoretical question	Specific SW New Zealand question	Overall method to answer question	Specific Activities	Qualitative methods used
What is the current understanding of this place? What is the range of stories told about it?	How do people understand SW NZ? What is the range of stories they tell about it? [These questions are answered broadly in Table 3.1. They are re-addressed looking at representations in specific locations in Chapter 7]	“Map” the geography of stories that comprises the place meaning <i>Uses stories as reflections of current place meanings</i>	(A) Collect current representations of the area	Participant observation
			(B) Analyze representations to identify story underneath	Textual/discourse analysis; Analysis of place names; Juxtapose different representations; Read other scholars’ academic stories
What kind of land use is seen as appropriate in this place? Which stories influenced past policy decisions? How did the current place meaning develop over time?	How did SW NZ come to be seen as pristine nature of global significance? How did negotiation over stories over time shape the current place meaning and use of land for recreation/tourism? [These questions are answered in Chapters 4 through 6]	Analyze the historical geography of storytelling to reconstruct underlying processes of negotiation over meaning <i>Draws on the role of stories in shaping place meanings over time.</i>	(C) Trace the history of storytelling over time	Archival research; Oral history interview conversations with those who created representations
			(D) Explain the history of storytelling using broader social and political context	Use broader historic literature; Relate specific archives and interviews to larger context; Identify how power-geometries between storytellers shaped which stories became dominant

Mapping a Geography of Stories

The questions in the first row of Table 3.2 correspond to the main objective of my thesis to understand place-meanings, both in general and in southwest New Zealand in particular. Since I conceptualize place as a geography of stories, my overall method to answer these questions about place-meanings is to map the geography of stories present in a given area, as I did in Table 3.1 above. This mapping process that led to Table 3.1 required me to collect current representations of the area and analyze those representations to identify their underlying story. Table 3.2 summarizes the mixed qualitative methods I drew on in performing each of these activities. Specific details about each activity are narrated below using the case of Te Wāhipounamu. For the sake of clarity, the activities in Table 3.2 and the corresponding sub-sections below are labelled using letters.

(A) Collecting Representations of Te Wāhipounamu

Places are represented in myriad ways and sites. (Figure 2.1 represented these multiple discursive spaces of representation using blue and green circles.). Representations of land may be written, oral, or verbal. They may be physically tied to the landscape they represent (e.g. signage) or separated (e.g. agency records stored in the National Archives). Table 3.3 conveys the range of possible sites of representation. Both those I collected and analyzed in this study as well as those I did not have the time or access to analyze are set out in the table.

My analysis focused primarily on official representations of land, such as those found in legislation or produced by government agencies. This choice resulted because such legal or governmental stories tend to have the most influence on land use policy. Official representations of land often – though not always – correspond to dominant place-meanings and/or come from explicit political debate over land meaning and use. For example, records of the Waitangi Tribunal explicitly narrate the process of negotiating land use and place meanings. I also focused particularly on interpretation materials such as those produced by the Department of Conservation. Since these materials are designed to convey a sense of a place to visitors by telling stories, they make an ideal lens to reflect how those creating them understand that place (Chapter 7).

Table 3.3: Discursive Sites Where Stories about Land are Represented

Sites of representation I analyzed for SW New Zealand		Other sites of representation I did not analyze	
Types of representation	Examples	Types of representation	Examples
Legal	Legislation	Personal	Parliamentary submissions
	Parliamentary debates		Life histories
Commercial	Advertising brochures		Letters
Government	Management plans	Artistic	Literature (esp. memoir)
	Agency records		Paintings
	DoC Interpretation		Photographs
	Waitangi Tribunal Reports	Popular	Newspaper text
Academic	Scholarly texts		Electronic media

(B) Analyzing Representations to Identify the Story They Tell

In mapping the range of stories told about southwest New Zealand, I approached the representations I gathered as reflections of the stories used to understand this location. (Though presented here as two separate activities, in practice the process of encountering a representation and analysing the narrative behind it is intertwined. Indeed, scholars of “texts” would tend not to draw any distinction.) One major benefit of seeing representations in terms of the stories they tell is that it allows comparison between very different types of sources (e.g. a piece of advertising and a piece of legislation) at a range of scales.

Representations come in a wide range of sizes. They can be as large as an academic history book with an explicitly narrated account of events. The proverb “a picture is worth a thousand words” emphasizes that a single image may convey a whole story. Similarly, a story can be represented by a single word, name, or phrase. For instance, the American wilderness myth is a complex, multi-faceted story referenced in a representation of a few words. Roger Shank (1990, p. 39-40) emphasizes that stories are only as big as they need to be by using the old joke about prisoners who told the same joke

so many times that they stopped using the words and started bursting out in laughter whenever one referenced joke “42”:

“Is forty-two a story? Of course it is, and it isn’t. It doesn’t sound like a story; it’s more the name of a story, so to speak. In some sense, every story is simply the name of a longer story. No one tells all the details of any story, so each story is shortened. How much shortening has to take place until there is no story left? A story shortened so that it ceases to be understood is no longer a story, but what is understandable to one person may not be understandable to another, so it is clear that ‘story’ is a relative term. In any case, as long as it is understood, it remains a story. For this reason, there are some very short stories.”

Shank goes on to link these short stories with language and naming:

“One word or simple phrasal labels often describe the story adequately enough in what we have termed culturally common stories. To some extent, the stories of a culture are observable by inspecting the vocabulary of that culture. Often entire stories are embodied in one very culture-specific word” (p. 149).

Thus stories exist at a variety of scales and levels of specificity.

Similarly, representations of land may be specific or more general; some tell stories of “this place” while others tell stories of “this type of place” as identified by culture-specific phrases. I term words or phrases that tell stories of types of places as general categories, as shown in the later rows of Table 3.1. For example, representations of a particular national park simultaneously reflect understandings of that specific park as well as general understandings of what the storyteller understands by the general category of national park. At the same time narratives about national parks influence the place meaning of a given park, stories about a particular park contribute to the evolving general definition of a national park (Louter 2006). Understandings of general categories and specific places belonging to the category are co-constituted. Thus in analyzing the stories implicit in a representation, one must be cognizant of how the words used to label general categories change meaning over time and within space.

Identifying the stories implicit in a given representation is more art than science. In my efforts to map stories associated with southwest New Zealand, I used a variety of techniques. Sometimes I started with someone else’s academic analysis of the story in a group of representations. I constantly read in the close, critical way that is known as textual or discourse analysis (Hay 2000, p. 122-143). In my close reading, I made frequent use of comparison and juxtaposition; often one can identify

differing stories by looking for subtle differences in two similar representations such as a final and draft management plan (e.g. Castagna 2005).

I also drew on my position as a newcomer to New Zealand. I had both the advantage and disadvantage of arriving with few pre-existing place-meanings (Hay 2000, p. 32-33). From my earliest encounters with representations of Te Wāhipounamu, I was reflexively watching my narrative understanding emerge. I thus was able to use my own personal efforts to reconcile conflicting representations as a tool for identifying implicit stories. However, this outsider position also meant that there are less dominant stories I may have missed, since my understanding of Te Wāhipounamu was mainly shaped by legal and tourist representations of it. Also, I approached representations with American eyes, which likely led to different understandings of their underlying stories than a New Zealander would have developed.

Analyzing a Historical Geography of Storytelling

Answering the second set of questions this thesis asks about how current place-meanings evolved (presented in the second row in Table 3.2) then required me to analyze how the geography of stories I had mapped developed over time. My overall method of analysis might be called tracing a historical geography of storytelling. In order to reconstruct past negotiations over place-meanings and the impact of particular stories, I had to both trace when, how, and by whom particular stories were created as well as situate these storytelling processes within a broader historical context.

(C) Trace the History of Storytelling over Time

Once I had identified the range of current stories in Te Wāhipounamu, I turned my efforts to understanding how each story in my geography of stories evolved over time. Drawing on my training as an environmental historian, I asked a series of questions about these stories: Who was telling this story, in what time, in what context, in what place, and for what purpose? What was the influence of this story? How does it fit into large political negotiations over land use? I compared past and current

versions of stories to understand their evolution over time. I examined various representations of a story, seeking to understand the situation in which each had been created.

In the case of Te Wāhipounamu, I focused on three specific stories which correspond to the three ways of naming the area identified in the first three rows of Table 3.1. For each of the three stories addressed in the next three chapters – world heritage, national parks, and Ngāi Tahu homeland – I used two main sets of sources to reconstruct the circumstances under which the story was first told about southwest New Zealand and how it evolved over time.

First, I spoke with the storytellers themselves when possible. These interview conversations with those who created the representations I analyzed may be thought of as oral histories, although not in the tape-recorded formal sense of the term. A list of storytellers with whom I spoke follows the References; specific comments are cited as personal communication in the text. Unlike formal structured interviews transcribed and approached as texts themselves (Hay 2000, p. 50-82), my conversations were semi-structured. Beginning from questions about when, how, or why a given representation was produced, I identified people who could tell me a story about the process. Listening to their stories was an iterative organic process; sometimes I shared my evolving narrative understanding and received corrective feedback or additional perspectives. Second, when it was not possible to speak with storytellers, I used documents such as government agency files to reconstruct storytelling processes. Acknowledging how individual memory itself is shaped by the act of narrating, I also used written records to corroborate specific explanations provided by those I spoke with or to resolve conflicting accounts.

(D) Explain History of Storytelling Using Broader Context

As I was developing an understanding of the events and rationale behind each story, I drew on historical literature to explain these events. (Again, in practice reconstructing a storytelling process and placing it within a broader historical context are intertwined.) Specifically, I used literature about broader historic power-geometries within New Zealand

society to explain storytelling processes and the outcome of political negotiations over meanings of land.

Evolving Place-Meanings in Southwest New Zealand

This chapter has introduced my case study site, illustrating the geography of stories that underlies Te Wāhipounamu's contemporary meanings as a pristine site for tourism, recreation, and conservation of flora and fauna. It has laid out my method for using a range of representations of land to metaphorically map this geography of stories. It also explained how I use oral history conversations, archival research, and the wider history literature to analyze how a geography of stories developed over time.

In the next three chapters, I reconstruct past negotiations over the place meaning of southwest New Zealand. I thus answer my broader theoretical questions about how place-meanings develop over time and how past stories relate to present land use choices. I use many of the same representations I used in this chapter to map the geography of stories of Te Wāhipounamu, but I look at these representations slightly differently. Rather than analyzing what each representation reflects about current understandings of the area, I examine the storytelling process that produced each representation. Chapter 4 through 6 thus tell three linked stories of how place-meanings of Te Wāhipounamu have evolved over time. One key pristine narrative – and the one referenced by how I have named and defined my thesis' case study – is the world heritage story, which defines southwest New Zealand as a globally unique wilderness area of universal significance. Chapter 4 examines the 1980s storytelling context to explain the world heritage story's uneven impact on existing place-meanings.

Chapter Four

The Creation of Te Wāhipounamu South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area

This chapter uses Te Wāhipounamu as one example of the political negotiation whereby stories of pristine nature become associated with a given landscape and in turn shape policy decisions. I begin by teasing out the narrative implicit in the general category of world heritage, briefly examining examples of the world heritage story's impact around the world. While rooted in mid-twentieth century Eurocentric understandings of heritage, stories about world heritage as a type of place are both evolving and contested. Thus naming new locations as world heritage may either contradict or reinforce existing place-meanings. The result of world heritage listing in a given location depends upon pre-existing place-meanings, the specific politics of heritage in individual nations, and which specific criteria are used to list a site. I explore the storytelling context of mid-1980s nominations of New Zealand sites for world heritage status. After tracing similarities and differences in the initial telling of the world heritage story in Te Wāhipounamu and Tongariro, I contrast the story's differing contemporary influence on place-meanings. I explain this contrast in terms of historic differences in conceptions of nature in Tongariro and southwest New Zealand and contemporary differences in their management structures.

“A child of its time and lineage:” World Heritage as a Type of Place

World heritage is a global narrative defined by the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, signed in Paris at the 17th United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Conference in November 1972. The signatory State Parties to the Convention affirmed that it was “incumbent on the international community as a whole to participate in the protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value” in consideration “of the magnitude and gravity of the new dangers threatening them.” By ratifying the Convention, they thus recognized that “such heritage constitutes a

world heritage for whose protection it is the duty of the international community as a whole to co-operate” (UNESCO 1972, p. 1).

The 1972 Convention defined world heritage as a particular type of place. In the last chapter, I argued that place-meanings exist at the intersection between the specific (names and associated stories of “this place”) and the general (names and stories of “type of place”). Within this framework, “world heritage site” names one such general category of places. When specific locations are listed on the World Heritage List, stories of world heritage as a type of place join pre-existing stories of that specific place to create new understandings. The new stories of global significance that are created sometimes obscure and sometimes reinforce existing stories. Understanding why world heritage listing can have such variable outcomes on existing place-meanings requires understanding both the original intentions and subsequent evolution of the 1972 Convention.

The Convention’s structure was significantly shaped both by prevailing attitudes towards heritage preservation in 1972 and wide-spread concern that unique sites in developing countries were being destroyed. As summarized by Douglas Pocock (1997, p. 260) in his 25-year retrospective, the structure centres on a non-governmental World Heritage Committee (WHC) with three functions:

“[The WHC] was to produce a World Heritage List of cultural and natural properties ‘of outstanding universal value’ from nominations submitted by State Parties (a term used by the WHC for a country which has ratified the 1972 Convention). The assessment of cultural heritage sites was to be undertaken for the WHC by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and natural sites by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). Secondly, from the accepted and inscribed properties, it was to produce a List of World Heritage in Danger, for the purposes of emergency assistance. Thirdly, it was to administer a World Heritage Fund to assist needy State Parties in protecting their World Heritage properties. A logical fourth function was added later – monitoring the state of conservation of inscribed properties”

Thus the Convention set up a voluntary international regime to evaluate, ratify, and recognize on a global scale sites of ‘universal value’ (UNESCO 1972).

In this regime, signatory nations’ governments – known as State Parties – prepare nomination documents that are evaluated by the appropriate UNESCO body (IUCN or ICOMOS). Evaluators assess the significance of their natural or cultural values as well as the rigour of State Party protection mechanisms (Leblanc 1986). The voluntary nature of the Convention is emphasized by Michael Hitchcock (2002), who uses Benedict Anderson to argue for conceiving the World Heritage List as an

“imagined community” of sites. He points out that while “imagined communities may lack the formal and juridical power of established states,” they nonetheless “provide a moral framework for international mobilization” (Hitchcock 2002, p.165).

Conceptualizing world heritage as an imagined community highlights both the role of collective stories in imagining the community and the problems of defining its membership. Examining world heritage from an international law perspective, Janet Blake (2000, p. 84) concludes that “cultural heritage is less of an objective, physical existence than the range of associations which accompany an object or monument and which provide the sense of being part of a group.” Thus identifying and naming world heritage sites as places with ‘universal value’ is inherently a subjective and political act, closely tied to questions about whose values are reflected in the structure of the Convention and the criteria it uses to evaluate sites.

Summarizing his reflections on the world heritage project, Douglas Pocock (1997, p. 268) concludes that the convention was “a child of its time, as well as its lineage.” As this quote hints, understanding how the Convention’s implicit assumptions about heritage preservation continue to influence its work requires understanding its genealogy. Four key features of the Convention deserve mention in order to understand the time and lineage that shaped this agreement and continue to influence the story it tells about world heritage.

First, the very idea of ‘universal’ heritage hints at a particular universalizing way of understanding world history, with the history of individual groups being aggregated to form a cultural inheritance for all people. As the text on the UNESCO website’s *About World Heritage* page explains, “What makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application. World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located” (UNESCO n.d.). According to Pocock (1997, p 267), this implicit assumption of one universal world history was “perhaps largely unchallenged during the early years of UNESCO’s existence” but was “intellectually untenable” by the 1990s. Even a cursory examination of the world history

historiography illustrates the debate Pocock references; by now the problematic links between a continuing culture of colonialism and universal conceptions of history are well established.⁵

Second, by conceiving heritage as a relic from the past to be protected from the ravages of present use, the original Convention reflects the European (and especially Anglo) intellectual legacy of heritage preservation, with its colonial lineage in the disciplines of archaeology and anthropology (Layton 2001, p. 1-30; also see Lindgren 1995). By vesting responsibility for cultural sites in the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the Convention equated cultural heritage with physical ruins produced by so-called monumental cultures (Pocock 1997, p. 261; also see Long & Sweet 2006, p. 459-461). Henry Cleere's examination of World Heritage List inscriptions up to 2000 illustrates how this cultural bias in the Convention continued to shape its application into the twenty-first century. Cleere found that despite rhetoric of equality and universality, 55% of the 630 culture sites were in Europe. The remaining cultural sites tended to be "monumental" sites that correlated to the western ideas of cultural heritage as large ruins; only 4% of sites were in Africa and 1% in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands (Layton 2001, p. 25). Similarly, preserving heritage by freezing physical relics in time is a particularly European notion, contrasting for example with the Māori idea that cultural preservation lies in continual use. I became aware of one particular example of these contrasting perceptions while touring the Matakītaki Pa site near Pirongia in the Waikato. The DoC archaeologist leading the tour explained that the European idea of conserving prehistoric kumara pits would be to fence them off as something to look at while the Māori idea of preserving their essence would be to continue using them for the kumara-growing purposes for which they were intended (Dave Veart, personal comm. 4/9/07).

Third, by splitting world heritage into separate spheres of the natural and the cultural, the Convention reinforces the long western tendency to distinguish between the built environment and pristine nature. Both the criteria for defining sites and the administrative structure of the Convention reproduce this problematic nature-culture duality (Pocock 1997, p. 261-266, Kirby 1997, p. 68-73). According to Raoul Bianchi (2002, p. 83), the influence of the American National Parks movement in

⁵ This debate and the relevant literature are explored in Professor Tim Burke's History 63 course as taught at Swarthmore College, Swarthmore PA. Syllabus available at <http://weblogs.swarthmore.edu/burke/?page_id=203>.

UNESCO's conceptions of heritage explains the rationale for this split in structure. Indeed, one direct catalyst for the Convention was the Yellowstone National Park centennial in 1972 (Ishwaran 2004, p. 43-45). This separation between pristine nature and European metropolitan culture is linked to a continuing culture of colonialism and imperialism. A further implication of the split is that the world heritage story is told differently depending on whether a site is listed under natural or cultural criteria. Pristine stories are told about sites listed under natural criteria whereas human achievements are the focus of stories told about cultural sites.

A final link between the original Convention structure and the maintenance of status quo power relations results from it being a voluntary international agreement. The authority over nomination maintained by State Parties ensures the World Heritage List only contains world heritage sites compatible with how governments wish to portray their history and identity. Pocock (1997, p. 266) points out the resulting tension between the work of the convention and the national sovereignty of the signatory bodies:

“Heritage of world rank, then, derives its status from the imprimatur of an international body. But that body can only inscribe properties nominated to it by individual countries. World heritage is thus the sum of scrutinized national heritages: the accumulation of nominations from State Parties which have ratified the 1972 Convention. The initiative lies with individual countries. This means that at any one time the pattern of world heritage is a reflection of the competence, complexion and activity of the states' nominating committees.”

Thus the Convention structure serves to reproduce understandings of places and national identity already held by dominant members of State Party governments.

“A child of its time, as well as its lineage,” the Convention from the beginning separated heritage into irreplaceable material traces from past civilizations on the one hand and pristine natural areas on the other. It assumed both of these sorts of heritage could be assessed for universal significance by the WHC, comprised of representatives of the Convention's State Parties. It thus reflects its birth in the late 1960s and early 1970s when world heritage efforts focused on preventing the destruction of treasured sites in developing or politically unstable nations, before the cultural turn and post-colonialism's general reassessment of universal assumptions in response to global indigenous movements (Pawson & Cant 1992). Its lineage was a decidedly European one of historic

trusts and archaeology, wilderness preservation and national parks, the seven wonders of the world and a universal conception of world history.

This genealogy has to a certain extent continued to influence the Convention's present working. However, given the role individual signatory nations play, a process of dialogue since 1972 has led to evolutions in the understanding of world heritage. On the one hand, the global interpretations of the World Heritage Committee influence local State Parties' heritage preservation activities. State Parties in turn shape the emerging global narrative. Their values shape both their activities as Committee members and their nominations of national sites for world heritage status.

From Monumental Sites to Cultural Landscapes: An Evolving Global Conversation

Dialogue between global and local understandings of heritage has played out in various countries in the past three decades since the Convention was signed. In the process, world heritage has been a narrative that sometimes complements and sometimes conflicts with the other stories used by nations, regions, communities, and individuals to reflect and shape their identities.

Positive portrayals of how world heritage reinforces existing place-meanings are widely promoted by UNESCO (see the quarterly *World Heritage Review* magazine for examples). In UNESCO's conception, world heritage status represents global recognition of some of the world's most special places and ensures their protection by raising their international reputation, providing training or technical preservation assistance to countries lacking internal resources for preservation, and inspiring locals to value their heritage and participate in its conservation (UNESCO n.d., "Benefits of Ratification"). Inscribing a site on the World Heritage List offers a number of potential benefits for localities and/or governments, though sometimes benefiting the latter at the expense of the former. Governments have used world heritage to promote tourism, advance a certain version of national history (though often at the expense of minority or indigenous populations), and manoeuvre for international status (Long & Sweet 2006, p. 450; Getson 2003; Smith 2002).

There is a fairly extensive scholarly literature about what Bianchi (2002) terms “the contested landscapes of world heritage” and the multitude of ways the world heritage story has impacted existing place-meanings; a sampling appears in the same theme issue of the *International Journal of Heritage Studies*. In places as diverse as Tibet, Cyprus, and Quebec, the global story of world heritage has influenced and reflected local conceptions of tourism, citizenship, and identity (Shepherd 2006; Cant, Goodall & Inns 2005, p. 139-152; Scott 2002; Evans 2002). Bianchi’s own case study of Garajonay National Park on La Gomera in the Canary Islands illustrates one set of cases where listing sites as pristine wilderness under natural criteria conflicts with pre-existing stories that do not separate humans and nature in the same way. Bianchi examines the effects of Garajonay’s creation in 1981 from what was previously common-access forest land and the park’s subsequent inscription on the World Heritage List in 1986. He concludes that world heritage status resulted in “a sense of the forest as a place of cultural belonging [being] marginalized in favour of its intrinsic ecological value” (Bianchi 2002, abstract). In terms of land use impact, preservation policies pursued to promote tourism appear to have eliminated older customary uses of the forest to the detriment of local residents (Bianchi 2002, p. 94-95).

Bianchi (2002, p. 96) attributes the mismatch between existing conceptions of place and the park’s world heritage status to ambiguity in the world heritage story itself as well as to the story of pristine nature promoted by the natural site criteria:

“If World Heritage is to mean more than simply another protected landscape, whether cultural, architectural or natural, then Garajonay National Park has yet to fulfil its promise. In particular, the significance of the Park as a WHS has failed to strike a chord in the hearts and minds of the wider population. Indeed, the Park/WHS has not yet become embedded at the level of insular cultural identity, beyond those who proclaim its value as either an ecological gem and/or touristic resource. This perhaps reflects the ambiguous nature of the World Heritage programme itself, whose self professed aims are, on the one hand, to highlight specific natural (and cultural/ architectural) landscapes which ‘need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole’... while on the other, concerned with the distinguishing symbolic properties which pertain to the history of that particular place and its inhabitants. It is also, arguably, linked to the manner in which the historical local knowledge of *el monte* and the traditions of environmental custodianship handed down through generations of Gomera’s inhabitants have been all but ignored in the current protection and promotion of the Park.”

Listing Garajonay as a natural World Heritage Site resulted in the world heritage story obscuring older stories and place-meanings on La Gomera.

The same conflict between local communities' place-meanings and the story told in world heritage listing is also evident in the ancient royal city and former capital of Luang Prabang in Laos. Colin Long & Jonathon Sweet (2006, p. 449) use interpretation materials in order to "to examine the domain in which Lao government interests in cultural heritage practice converge with those of international [world] heritage agencies." Their study cautions against a simplistic understanding of the relationship between world heritage stories and State Party governments' national narratives. They demonstrate how the current government's version of Lao nationalism is affirmed and made "harmless to the present" by interpretation of the former royal capital as a timeless remnant of the past, preserved as a World Heritage site (Long & Sweet 2006, p. 457-8). Long & Sweet (2006, abstract) thus find "that there is a marked convergence of the interests of international heritage bodies [involved with] World Heritage and the Lao authorities anxious to portray a particular vision of national identity through selective recognition of cultural heritage locations."

As the examples of La Gomera and Luang Prabang demonstrate, world heritage stories may obscure existing local stories. Simultaneously, however, emerging understandings of preservation in signatory nations have contributed to the evolution of the world heritage narrative. The definition of world heritage has broadened, acknowledging that not everyone divides nature from culture in the manner of Europe or the United States. New Zealand and Australia were leaders in bringing about the most important example to date of this sea change: the adoption in 1992 of criteria for "cultural landscapes" without monumental ruins to be recognized as cultural heritage.

As sites were nominated and listed under the Convention's original guidelines, member nations realized that the initial criteria definitions were biased towards valuing the heritage of "monumental" cultures such as those found in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. In New Zealand and Australia, realization that relatively few sites in the Asia-Pacific region were eligible for cultural listing coincided with domestic post-colonial processes of examining the role of indigenous communities in heritage definition and management. In the late twentieth century, these countries began redefining their internal approaches to preservation to recognize the living relationships of Māori and Aboriginal Australians to their ancestral landscapes. However, they soon realized the Convention's criteria did not provide for global recognition of this heritage. Australasian efforts

within the World Heritage Committee led in the 1990s to the development of the “cultural landscapes” criteria, culminating in the 1993 listing of Tongariro National Park on New Zealand’s North Island as the first site with dual world heritage status (Kirby 1997, p. 73-80).

For certain sites, then, the current world heritage story is more nuanced. Moving away from the Convention’s colonizing roots, cultural landscapes such as Tongariro are portrayed as sites of long-standing relationships between the human and non-human worlds. However, tension exists between this cultural landscapes approach and previous universalizing meanings of world heritage. The cultural landscapes criterion represents an addition to rather than a replacement of older natural criteria which potentially obscure cultural place-meanings. Signatory State Parties maintain the power to choose whether or not to nominate a site as a cultural landscape. Bianchi (2002, p. 83-84) summarizes the result in the following way:

“In recent years, UNESCO and its advisory bodies have...begun to recognise the interrelationships between cultural traditions and specific features of the natural landscape... However, in practice, there is still substantial variation with regard to the interpretation of these guidelines by state parties as well as local site managers. Moreover, these new guidelines still do not account for the fact that many areas classified as natural properties may in fact be of cultural and/or spiritual importance for adjacent populations.”

Therefore while world heritage narratives can represent global recognition of post-colonial stories about landscape, they will only do so when such an approach to preservation of cultural heritage fits with the goals of the nominating State Party.

This variation in world heritage definitions implies that understanding the impact of the world heritage story in a particular place requires understanding the historical context of the listing process. By codifying a particular global understanding (defined by the listing criteria) of a given location, world heritage status may complement or conflict with evolving pre-existing understandings of an area. The subsequent impact of world heritage stories on place-meanings varies depending on when a site was listed, under which criteria it was inscribed, and how heritage was viewed by those within the country preparing the nomination. Thus even within a given country the world heritage story might more accurately be referred to in the plural, representing a range of definitions of world heritage that are fluid in time and space.

Telling World Heritage Stories in New Zealand

New Zealand's Cabinet officially ratified the World Heritage Convention on 1 October 1984, though the New Zealand National Commission of UNSECO had begun pushing for ratification as early as 1980. The late date of ratification was largely due to concerns over the financial implications of officially ratifying the agreement as well as a lack of urgency to benchmark New Zealand's heritage against the rest of the world (Kirby 1997, p. 93-94). Another explanation for the time lag between the 1972 Convention and ratification is the strength of existing domestic heritage preservation legislation. Since the Convention was at first mainly viewed as a tool for protecting threatened sites in developing nations, protected area authorities saw little urgency or benefit to be gained in listing New Zealand sites. As the introduction of a 2004 DoC discussion document summarizes, "to a large extent, New Zealand's past conservative approach to World Heritage designation is a reflection of the high degree of legal and management protection already conferred on New Zealand's comprehensive network of protected areas" (DoC 2004b).

The initial impetus to nominate domestic protected areas resulted from UNESCO concerns in the late 1970s about relative dearth of natural sites compared to cultural (Kirby, p. 65-73 and 93-96). In 1979, in response to IUCN efforts to develop "An Indicative Inventory of Natural Sites of World Heritage Quality," the Department of Lands and Survey (DLS) head office (as ultimate authority for national parks and reserves) solicited suggestions of suitable sites from its regional commissioners. Among the suggested sites were Westland, Mount Cook, and Fiordland National Parks. Once the Convention was ratified following the 1984 election of the Fourth Labour government, efforts to nominate New Zealand sites quickly gained momentum. DLS solicited additional suggestions from the National Park and reserve boards and encouraged boards to start drafting official nomination documents. One reason for the urgency was a desire to have at least one New Zealand site listed as world heritage before the 1987 centennial of the gifting of Tongariro National Park to the Crown (Kirby 1997, p. 93-95.) These efforts to achieve world heritage status were part of broader government efforts during the 1980s to promote New Zealand as a tourism destination and to define a

new national identity based on a “clean green” and multicultural image (Britton, Le Heron & Pawson 1992, p. 154-147 and 267-285; Le Heron & Pawson 1996, p. 273-277).

1986: Three DLS Nominations under Natural Criteria

By 1986, three New Zealand sites – Tongariro, Fiordland, and Mt. Cook/Westland – had been nominated for the World Heritage List. The relevant park board prepared each nomination, which Cabinet then approved, with no wider public or parliamentary debate until UNSECO’s consideration of the nominations were reported in *The Press* or other media. Mt. Cook/Westland National Parks (as a joint unit straddling the Main Divide) and Fiordland National Park were submitted to the WHC and accepted as world heritage in 1986 as sites of universal “natural” significance. As narrated in the nominating documents, these areas were globally significant as pristine nature. The nominations barely mention Ngāi Tahu connections to the landscape. Rather, the historical discussion emphasizes the minimal colonial imprint on the floral and faunal remnants of the ancient super continent of Gondwanaland (DLS 1985b, DLS 1985c). The emphasis of the nominations on natural values corresponds to the way DLS understood and interpreted these three southern parks in the pre-1986 period (Chapter 5).

The initial understanding of world heritage reflected in these nominating documents continues to influence the world heritage story in Te Wāhipounamu. First, DLS as manager of national parks and reserves was the agency chosen to administer the Convention. This choice placed responsibility for world heritage in New Zealand in the hands of an institution whose prevailing understanding of preservation equated heritage with naturalness (Kirby 1997, p. 111-117). Second, from the beginning world heritage status was pursued as a means to the larger political ends of gaining global recognition for New Zealand’s local assets and strengthening the tourist economy. Close reading of DLS memoranda⁶ justifying the nominations demonstrates they were initiated to attain the politically

⁶ The documents are available at the National Archives in Wellington: AAUM W404 box 211 NRS 2/11 World Heritage Nominations 1985-86.

desirable goal of having sites on the global list, rather than a way of advancing heritage preservation goals per se since existing legislation was seen as giving adequate protection.

Speaking with DoC staff of the four southwest conservancies that comprise Te Wāhipounamu (Otago, West Coast, Canterbury, and Southland) in 2007 – particularly those who were formerly DLS or Forest Service employees – I similarly found a persistent view that world heritage equals international tourist draw card and is only marginally relevant to DoC’s “real” conservation work. Some seemed confused about why I was so interested in world heritage at all, seeing listing as an accolade sought by Head Office that does not change their own role of protecting the values in the areas for which they are responsible. One person was almost annoyed when I shared my observations about the uneven promotion of world heritage in DoC publications and commercial advertising. This individual somewhat irritably reminded me that DoC aims its interpretation and management policies towards all visitors, not just the international tourists who form the audience for commercial advertising. This reaction suggests that this employee saw no relevance in world heritage for the domestic part of DoC’s audience. Even those explicitly supportive of the world heritage project consider it a “nice to have” that has fairly little impact given the strength of New Zealand’s domestic preservation legislation. Thus the initial context for pursuing world heritage in New Zealand partially explains the paradox I encountered examining representations of Te Wāhipounamu in 2007.

The DLS bias towards heritage as naturalness in the southwest part of the country continues to influence not only the world heritage story but also New Zealand’s overall understanding and management of heritage (Chapter 6-7; also see Memon & Perkins 2000, p. 133-140). DoC’s discussion document *Our World Heritage: Towards a New Zealand Tentative List* (2004b, p. 2) explains: “In the past there has been a lack of emphasis on cultural heritage in [world heritage] nominations, probably due to a lack of appreciation of the value of cultural heritage and concerns over the robustness of any nominations.” However, recent years have seen a slowly growing sense of the importance of cultural and historic heritage and a concurrent emphasis by DoC staff on managing and interpreting this heritage (Paul Mahoney, pers comm, 22/6/07). Today’s broader cultural emphasis was foreshadowed in the circumstances surrounding the third 1986 nomination, that of Tongariro National Park.

1993: Cultural Recognition for Tongariro

In its story of a spectacular volcanic landscape, the original Tongariro nomination is analogous to the other two 1986 nominations. However, Tongariro was nominated for cultural as well as natural world heritage status. This dual nomination (DLS 1986) reflects the greater influence of cultural stories in the pre-1986 place-meaning of Tongariro compared to other New Zealand national parks and the park's role in the 1887 centenary. Initially gifted to the Crown by Ngāti Tuwharetoa Paramount Chief Te Heuheu Tukino IV (Horonuku) in 1887, Tongariro was long portrayed in interpretation stories not only as a place of pristine nature but also as a place of deep significance to Ngāti Tuwharetoa (Kirby 1997 p. 83-95). This story of the connection between the iwi and the volcanic landscape also shaped Tongariro National Park's management structure, with a permanent spot provided on the Park Board for an iwi representative. As a result of both past stories and the Ngāti Tuwharetoa voice in the body responsible for its preparation, the 1986 Tongariro nomination document also told a second story of the cultural significance of the landscape to both the iwi and in the creation of the New Zealand National Park system. This contrasts with the case of the southern parks, where less pre-1986 emphasis on Ngāi Tahu stories and no formal role for Ngāi Tahu on the relevant Park Boards resulted in nomination documents reflecting only European stories.

The WHC accepted Tongariro National Park as a natural site in 1990, but deferred a decision on the dual submission, requesting further information on the cultural aspects of the nomination. Besides the lack of appropriate cultural criteria to justify the listing, the deferral reflects WHC concerns that the existing Tongariro management plan did not adequately protect the cultural values. Within the WHC, the evaluation of the Tongariro cultural nomination coincided with efforts to establish cultural landscapes criteria. The persistence of Ngāti Tuwharetoa in pursuing cultural world heritage status combined with the WHC's desire to use Tongariro as a test case for the new criteria (Kirby 1997, p. 96-101). After the preparation of a second nomination document (Forbes 1993) explicitly applying for recognition under the new cultural landscapes criteria, the WHC granted cultural world heritage status to Tongariro National Park in 1993. It was the first site listed as a

cultural landscape as well as the first “mixed” site in the world to be recognized for the global significance of both its natural and cultural attributes.

Within New Zealand, the years between the initial 1986 and the second 1993 Tongariro nominations were also years of change. In 1984, the election of the Fourth Labour Government precipitated policy shifts in a number of areas that influenced world heritage. Neo-liberal economic restructuring driven by the Treasury combined with the environmental lobby’s wide-spread dissatisfaction with the agencies – DLS and the Forest Service (FS) – responsible for conservation policy (Britton, Le Heron & Pawson 1992, p. 187-214; see also Memon & Perkin 2000, p. 11-23). The resulting Environment Act 1986, Conservation Act 1987, and Local Government Act 1989 mandated major reform in environmental management. DLS and the FS’s conservation and development functions were separated, with the Conservation Act creating the Department of Conservation (DoC) and the State Owned Enterprises Act 1986 creating a number of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs). One result of these reforms was a series of fierce battles on the West Coast over whether to include given areas in DoC’s conservation estate or make them production lands (Le Heron & Pawson 1996, p. 260-268; see also Kirby 1997, p. 164-202).

The same time period also coincided with a reassessment of the role of Māori in New Zealand life, continuing a larger social process that had begun in the 1970s (Britton, Le Heron & Pawson 1992, p. 270-276). The Fourth Labour Government’s campaign promise to finally resolve long-standing iwi grievances led it to extend the mandate of the Waitangi Tribunal. The Tribunal, set up in 1975 to hear claims of breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi arising thereafter, was in 1985 given the authority to hear grievances dating back to 1840 by the Treaty of Waitangi Amendment legislation. A number of large and long-standing claims were promptly filed. One of the first upon which the Tribunal reported was Wai 27, the Ngāi Tahu claim disputing early purchases of much of the South Island; the Waitangi Tribunal published its assessment in 1991, beginning a six-year process of negotiating a settlement between Ngāi Tahu and the Crown (Chapter 6). A second result of these efforts to decolonize the state was inclusion of a “treaty clause” in most of the Fourth Labour Government’s legislation, including the Conservation Act, Environment Act, and State Owned Enterprises Act. These treaty clauses recognized the new primacy given to the Treaty of Waitangi in

New Zealand law, specifying that nothing in any given act was to be taken as negating the Crown's basic Treaty obligations to iwi.

The differing emphasis and authorship of the second Tongariro nomination (DoC 1993) emerged from these wider changes in New Zealand society. The 1993 nomination was prepared not by the Department of Lands and Survey, but by the new Department of Conservation under legislation that explicitly mandates recognizing iwi perspectives. The second Tongariro nomination differs from the first in how it presents the cultural story, giving comparatively less emphasis to Tongariro as New Zealand's first national park and comparatively more to the Ngāti Tuwharetoa link.

1989: An Expanded World Heritage Area in Southwest New Zealand

By bringing the Park Boards into standardized relationships with one agency, the creation of the Department of Conservation also created the opportunity to consolidate and expand the two southern world heritage listings. In 1989, New Zealand nominated for world heritage status an expanded area comprising the existing Mt Cook/Westland and Fiordland sites along with Mt. Aspiring National Park and other conservation lands between the four main parks. Prepared jointly by DoC, the Ngāi Tahu Māori Trust Board, and conservation organization Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society, the nomination document (DoC, Forest & Bird, & Ngāi Tahu 1989) closely resembles the 1993 Tongariro nomination in tone, form, content, and even font. Both emphasize the long relation of iwi (Ngāti Tuwharetoa and Ngāi Tahu respectively) to the nominated landscapes. However, despite giving greater prominence to the Ngāi Tahu story compared with the two 1986 nomination documents, the expanded proposal only sought designation under natural world heritage criteria. Understanding why cultural stories received such attention in a nomination seeking recognition as a globally significant natural area requires looking at the earlier events that culminated in this 1989 proposal.

As early as 1985, individuals in the environmental movement had been pushing for a "South West World Heritage Area." The idea appears to have initiated with Forest & Bird Conservation

Director Gerry McSweeney, who spent 3 months in Australia in 1985 on an ANZAC Fellowship exploring how World Heritage status had been used there to advance conservation interests against states rights advocates (Gerry McSweeney, pers comm, 21/1/08). In August 1985, McSweeney wrote a proposal for a South West New Zealand area and began a long process of championing it. Forest & Bird, the Native Forests Action Council, and the Federated Mountain Clubs jointly submitted it to DLS later that month (Kirby 1997, p. 234). In the rush to achieve world heritage status for at least one New Zealand site before the 1987 centennial, initial DLS support for McSweeney's proposal was lukewarm, since the two 1986 nominations were seen as having a better chance of acceptance.⁷ DLS did arrange for McSweeney to meet with UNESCO evaluator Jim Thorsell⁸ to discuss the expanded listing in January 1986.⁹ While Thorsell was cautiously positive, he emphasized that an extended application could not be successful until questions of land tenure in South Westland were resolved (Kirby 1997, p. 225-244).

Between 1986 and 1989, McSweeney and Forest & Bird continued to lobby for the extended proposal, eventually receiving Labour and then Opposition government support as a result of broader changes in the environmental policy climate. Forest & Bird's 1987 publication of a glossy book of photos (Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society 1987) extolling the pristine characteristics of the area (though with a chapter by Keri Hulme on significance to Māori) went a long way towards raising support for the proposal (Paul Dingwall, pers comm, 29/11/07). Another factor contributing to government support was the involvement of the Ngāi Tahu Māori Trust Board, whose "enthusiastic" support for the proposal should be seen in light of evidence being presented at the time before the Waitangi Tribunal supporting Ngāi Tahu claims in Westland and Fiordland (Sir Tipene O'Regan, pers comm, 16/10/07). Given the present tension between stories of land advanced by Ngāi Tahu and environmental lobbyists like Forest & Bird, this alliance at first seems unlikely. However, in 1989, environmentalists generally perceived Māori as (uneasy) allies in their efforts to prevent development

⁷ Details can be found in DLS internal files now available at National Archives, Wellington: AAUM W404 box 211 NRS 2/11 World Heritage Nominations 1985-86

⁸ Dr. James Thorsell (Canadian) had become executive officer of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) Commission on National Parks and Protected areas in 1984. He evaluated over 150 natural sites for world heritage status over his career (IUCN 2007).

⁹ National Archives, Wellington: AAUM W404 box 211 NRS 2/11 World Heritage Nominations 1985-86

of Crown lands of uncertain status. The underlying philosophical differences between Ngāi Tahu and Forest & Bird understandings of southwest New Zealand would only later become fully apparent.

This pragmatic coalition of diverse interests behind the nomination also explains why Ngāi Tahu, unlike Ngāti Tuwharetoa, did not insist on a dual natural/cultural proposal. Seeking global recognition for a story of Te Wāhipounamu as a cultural landscape would have conflicted with the existing DLS and Forest & Bird emphasis of the area as pristine wilderness. Reflecting the tension between universal and local cultural significance identified by Bianchi, there also seems to have been a perception that a cultural nomination would have little chance of succeeding; in other words, Ngāi Tahu's connection was not seen as being universally significant. Even in Tongariro, with long-documented recognition of the landscape's importance to Ngāti Tuwharetoa due to the 1887 gift, cultural acceptance by UNESCO seems to have been more a result of its status as the first national park in the work gifted by an indigenous people rather than its significance to the iwi (Kirby 1997, p. 99). In contrast to Tongariro, in 1989 stories of Ngāi Tahu connection to southwest New Zealand were largely absent from the dominant place-meaning. The *Ngāi Tahu Report* (1991) of the Waitangi Tribunal, published two years after the preparation of the nomination document, was arguably the first "official" recognition of Ngāi Tahu's cultural ties (and the Tribunal did not fully uphold Ngāi Tahu claims regarding Fiordland). An additional reason Ngāi Tahu pushed for inclusion of Māori stories in the nomination document and a Māori name but remained content to support a natural criteria nomination was the Tribunal process itself. In 1989, the energy of Ngāi Tahu leaders was firmly focused on arguing their claim. In comparison to other issues of resources and land access, pushing UNESCO recognition of Ngāi Tahu ties to southwest New Zealand was a low priority (Sir Tipene O'Regan, pers comm, 16 October 2007).¹⁰

In the event, the only public calls for a cultural nomination came from local residents wanting to highlight the area's pioneer history. They viewed world heritage with great suspicion, interpreting its emphasis on wilderness as a threat to local livelihoods and identities, as newspaper coverage at the time makes clear. Understanding this suspicion requires placing it within the context of the

¹⁰ The same low priority in comparison to other concerns is the reason why cultural nomination has not been pursued to date despite being considered by TRoNT (Rachel Puentener, pers comm, 16/1/08)

disproportionate effect mid-1980s economic restructuring policies had on West Coast communities compared to other regions (Scott 1995, p. 138-166). Val Kirby (1997, p. 225-244) describes varying local South Westland responses, presenting the debate over world heritage status as part of wider negotiations over West Coast land use. Since the earlier 1986 nominations included only existing national park land, they had been relatively uncontested. In South Westland, however, Forest & Bird and later DoC officials in Wellington used the expanded listing as a tool to ensure indigenous forest became part of the conservation estate. Indeed, in *Forests, Fiords & Glaciers* (1987, p. 11), Forest & Bird explicitly acknowledges the world heritage proposal as a continuation of (locally-controversial) 1981 efforts to conserve South Westland forests. Thus in South Westland, the world heritage story was deliberately used as a policy tool to shift existing place-meanings towards conservation and tourism (also see the story of the Haast Visitor Centre in Chapter 7).

Te Wāhipounamu South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area was established on 12 December 1990. Despite the cultural stories told in the nomination document and that document's family resemblance to the 1993 Tongariro nomination, Te Wāhipounamu was inscribed under natural criteria. Thus the world heritage story in this part of New Zealand reinforced the pristine stories about the area already present in the four national parks and extended them to the newly protected forests of South Westland. The 1990 Te Wāhipounamu listing and the 1993 Tongariro listing should be understood as emerging from the same general motivation for telling world heritage stories, but with important differences in the criteria under which they were listed, the extent to which the world heritage boundaries corresponded to internal management units, and the pre-existing place-meanings held by the storytellers involved. These differences in the context of the initial storytelling as presented in the nominations are vital to understanding the subsequent divergent impacts of the world heritage story in these two locations.

The Impact of World Heritage Stories in New Zealand

As of February 2008, New Zealand has three sites on the World Heritage List. Te Wāhipounamu and the Sub-Antarctic islands are listed under criteria for natural sites, while Tongariro is the world's first site recognized under both natural and cultural criteria. As required by UNESCO, DoC has also identified a tentative list of future nominations, including natural, cultural, and mixed sites (DoC 2006c). In each case, the world heritage story was told (or potentially will be told) in different ways and with different consequences. Comparison between the subsequent impact of world heritage listing on stories, place-meanings, and policy in Tongariro and Te Wāhipounamu is instructive for understanding how world heritage contributes to current place-meanings.

Tongariro World Heritage Park

In Tongariro, pre-existing place-meanings of the area as a national park have since 1993 been reinforced by the world heritage story. Today, the story of Tongariro as conveyed by the interpretation materials at Whakapapa Visitor Centre is synonymous with its dual world heritage status. The story of Te Heuheu's 1887 gift is reinforced by the global story of the first national park system in the world created by the gift of an indigenous people. The story of Ngāti Tuwharetoa's long connection with the park's sacred volcanoes (vividly conveyed in the audio visual presentation "The Sacred Gift") is reinforced by the world heritage designation of the area as a cultural landscape. (The arguably "spiritual approach to place" I observed represents a shift since 1997, when Val Kirby (p. 102) concluded that heritage in Tongariro was still being understood as naturalness.) The global significance of the unique volcanic ecology and flora/fauna of the area is conveyed by the natural world heritage status. The story of Tongariro's uniqueness is further highlighted by its status as the world's first dual world heritage area.

Dual world heritage status has not only influenced the stories told about Tongariro, but has also influenced management policy, as reflected in the way DoC staff conceive of their responsibilities (Bhrent Guy, pers comm, 31/8/07). Community Relations Programme Manager Bhrent Guy emphasizes that he manages Tongariro National Park not only for the people of New Zealand but also for the iwi and the people of the world. Similarly, Ngāti Tuwharetoa consider Tongariro's dual world heritage status as celebrating their enduring connection with the place. Ngāti Tuwharetoa support for world heritage is perhaps best illustrated by Paramount Chief Tumu Te Heuheu's role as WHC Chair and his efforts to promote world heritage as a tool for recognizing indigenous peoples' relationships with landscapes. The impact of the world heritage story in Tongariro is also apparent in how the surrounding local community understands the park. They have embraced its dual world heritage status as something to protect, making explicit reference to it in arguments over policy in the park. For example, Bhrent Guy has had local residents protest against DoC's use of 1080 poison "in a world heritage area."

In Tongariro, therefore, world heritage as a designation of natural and cultural universal significance has complemented and extended pre-1993 place-meanings. World heritage gave global recognition to long-told cultural stories about Ngāti Tuwharetoa links with the landscape and the 1887 gift that founded New Zealand's park system as well as celebrating the natural values of the volcanic landscape. The dual listing has thus been a tool for promoting what one might term a post-colonial understanding of heritage in this place.

Te Wāhipounamu South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area

In Te Wāhipounamu, in contrast, world heritage has not led to new place-meanings, but rather has enforced (and been used to sell) pre-existing understandings of pristine national parks. Numerous experiences during my research year reinforced my sense of the lack of meaning. First, during various presentations of this work in progress, I informally polled my audience. When challenged to locate Te Wāhipounamu or name its component parks, I found very few New Zealanders – including

professional geographers – able to do so. Second, DoC’s standard map of the conservation estate in the current edition of the “Exploring Parks” publication (DoC 2006b) does not include the boundary of Te Wāhipounamu. When I mentioned this to the person in charge of publications in Wellington’s Head Office, she was unaware and plans to include the boundaries on future versions of this brochure (Fiona Colquhoun, pers comm., 19/6/07). Third, coverage of the 31st World Heritage Committee meeting, held in Christchurch in June 2007, by local daily newspaper *The Press*, further confirmed this trend of minimal understanding of the meaning of world heritage. I saw the paper’s sense of where the world heritage area is located change by the day and the author. Te Wāhipounamu was sometimes explained as Fiordland and Mt Cook (Eaton & Gates 2007); sometimes Fiordland and South Westland (Crean 2007); and sometimes Fiordland, Westland, and Mt Cook (Steward I 2007). All four parks were only named in one article over the five days of coverage (‘SI scenic wonders in push for global status’ 2007).

The world heritage story’s impact on place-meanings and policy-making in Te Wāhipounamu has been minimal for two additional reasons. First, the boundaries of Te Wāhipounamu do not correspond to the internal DoC management structure. DoC is a decentralized organization, with responsibility for storytelling (in interpretation materials) and for land management devolved to the fourteen regional conservancies (Memon & Perkins 2000, p. 196-205). In a government climate of scarce resources, concern over safety of physical infrastructure following the Cave Creek disaster (discussed further in Chapter 7), and corporate performance yardsticks, work to be done exceeds available funds and staff resources. Trade-offs are made and priorities set according to the interests and values of the employees of each conservancy, leaving Head Office staff in Wellington in an advisory role but with little power to compel the conservancies to do anything against their will (William Bevil, pers comm, 19/6/07). In Tongariro, the world heritage site boundaries correspond to the national park management unit. In contrast, responsibility for conveying and promoting the world heritage status of Te Wāhipounamu exists in a vacuum between the four conservancies who manage various parks within the area and the Head Office staff charged with liaising with UNESCO and administering world heritage at the national level. No one has overall responsibility for the whole world heritage area.

The decentralized responsibility for administering and promoting the world heritage area continues to prevent the development of a coherent place-meaning. When Te Wāhipounamu was first listed, some seem to have believed that achieving world heritage status would enhance coordination between separate conservancies, though there was never intended to be one unified management structure for the world heritage area (Murray Reedy, pers comm., 29/11/07). Despite wide recognition of differences in approaches between the four conservancies (e.g. Moore 1992), efforts to standardize world heritage promotion and policy seem to have started and ended with a 1991 working group that standardized signage but accomplished little else. To the extent that there is a coherent story told about Te Wāhipounamu, it is the story told by commercial tourism operators, especially in South Westland, who have found the world heritage story an effective way to market activities to international visitors. Interestingly, Lane, Corbett & McDonald (1996) found the same variable impact on place-meanings depending on the extent to which the world heritage area boundaries coincided with existing protected area management structures in Australia.

A second reason for the minimal impact is that DoC's current understanding of the values to be protected in Te Wāhipounamu includes both natural and cultural characteristics while the world heritage story only recognizes the natural ones. While at the time of the original 1989 nomination understandings of the four component national parks centred on stories of pristine nature, the ensuing years have seen an increasing emphasis on cultural and historic stories throughout DoC. (As discussed in Chapter 6, one catalyst for the change in the four southwest parks has been the 1997 Ngāi Tahu settlement, though the effect has been uneven across conservancies, as Chapter 7 makes clear.) Thus the world heritage story codifies an older understanding of place that no longer matches the understanding held by the majority of those within DoC responsible for developing interpretation materials.

The roots of the paradox of global celebration of the pristine in what today is domestically often interpreted as a cultural landscape do not lie only within the global story of world heritage. This chapter has demonstrated that much of the explanation for the differing impacts of World Heritage recognition on Tongariro and Te Wāhipounamu lies not only in the world heritage narrative itself, but in its interaction with pre-existing understandings of landscape in the national parks that were

nominated for world heritage listing in the late 1980s. Thus to fully understand the current place-meaning of Te Wāhipounamu, one must look further back in history at the process by which the place-meanings of its four component national parks developed. For this reason, the next chapter explores the interaction between stories of the pristine in southwest New Zealand and the evolving meaning over time and space of places named as national parks.

Chapter Five

Universal Stories in Local Place-Making: Four National Parks

In this chapter I explore the development of the national park story and its contribution to current place-meanings in Te Wāhipounamu. I begin by analyzing how DLS understood parks at the time of the initial world heritage nominations. After exploring the careful balance of human use and nature preservation reflected in the 1980s park story, I trace this dual way of viewing the pristine back to Europeans' dual nineteenth century responses to the New Zealand landscape. I explain how early understandings of conservation and national parks were locally specific and discuss the influence of early tourism, mountain recreation, and species preservation in southwest New Zealand. I explore the origins of the National Park Act 1952, which standardized conceptions of national parks and created national definitions of appropriate use. With the formal gazettement of the four southwest parks under this act, local place-meanings in southwest New Zealand were minimized and its history cast within larger national and international stories of national parks as progress. In the last decades of the twentieth century, understandings of this place remained closely tied to national and international understandings of the conservation estate and specifically the legal national park status of much of its area. Influenced by post-colonial scholarship emphasizing that conservation was a process of alienation of indigenous land just as much as productive use of landscapes, my story situates recent evolution in place-meanings in southwest New Zealand within a larger trans-national story of evolving views of parks and other protected areas.

National Parks: Balancing Human Use and Nature Protection

As of 2007, there were 14 national parks in New Zealand; they made up 11.5% of the land area (Swarbrick 2007). While comprising additional assorted conservation lands, the bulk of Te

Wāhipounamu World Heritage area is made up of four mainly mountainous parks (Figure 5.1). These parks are similarly the most iconic areas of Te Wahipouanumu, as illustrated by DoC's use of the parks to describe the location of the world heritage area. Fiordland, Aoraki/Mt Cook, Westland/Tai Poutini, and Mt Aspiring were gazetted respectively in 1952, 1953, 1960, and 1964. While much of the land within these four parks had been reserved – sometimes specifically for future national park purposes – earlier under the Lands Act 1885 and the Scenery Preservation Act 1903, dominant place-meanings of these areas as national parks fully emerged only after their official establishment under the National Park Act 1952.

Figure 5.1: Map of National Parks and DoC Visitor Centres

(used with permission from DoC 2006 "Exploring Parks" brochure)



The 1952 act provided the foundation of a unified system of national parks. For almost four decades following the 1952 act, each park in New Zealand was governed by a citizen park board, with the National Parks and Reserve Authority providing system-wide strategic direction. Day-to-day

operations were managed by DLS and staffed through a corps of rangers. (In 1987, DoC replaced DLS as the agency responsible for parks. In 1990 the citizen park boards were integrated into a wider system of conservation boards overseen by the National Conservation Authority (NCA)). The prevailing understanding of parks at the time of the initial world heritage nominations in 1986 is represented in the General Policy for National Parks 1983 (National Parks Authority 1983). Prepared by the National Parks Authority, the General Policy interprets the park story as presented in the National Parks Act 1980 (which updated the 1952 act). It specifies the principles upon which policy decisions in parks are to be based. Management plans for each park developed by the relevant park board must comply with the policies and principles set out in the General Policy.

Both the 1980 legislation and the General Policy 1983 make clear that parks represent pristine nature, explaining that “national parks have been set aside to protect areas of New Zealand of outstanding natural quality and worth” (National Parks Authority 1983, p. 20) which “shall be preserved as far as possible in their natural state” (National Parks Act 1980, section 4). Generally “relatively large, preferably in terms of tens of thousands of hectares and preferably comprising contiguous areas,” parks are landscapes with scenery, ecological systems or natural features “so beautiful, unique, or scientifically important that their preservation is in the national interest” (National Parks Authority 1983, p. 17). The policy on boundaries emphasizes that national parks are equated with nature, specifying that land within the park that does not have the necessary superlative qualities may be excluded from the park and “be administered by another authority” (p. 18).

Preserving their untouched character is the primary objective governing decisions about land use in national parks; they are to be “protected and managed with minimal interference to natural processes” (National Parks Authority 1983, p. 20). The General Policy (1983, p. 20-21) explicitly differentiates the basis of land use choices in park lands from “most other” productive areas “where effort is directed towards modifying or controlling nature, producing crops or extracting natural resources.” In national parks, in contrast, “efforts are directed towards protection of natural resources and maintaining ecological integrity.” One key implication of protecting parks’ pristine character is in management of flora and fauna; native species “shall as far as possible be preserved” while “introduced plants and animals shall as far as possible be exterminated,” a tall order in a vast and

rugged park like Fiordland (p. 22). Similarly, domestic animals such as dogs and horses are not allowed in parks except under carefully controlled circumstances (p. 24). “Introduced sports fish” and “game birds” however, provide an exception to this extermination policy. Their introduction predates national park status and they “are now accepted as providing an established and valuable resource” for recreation (p. 22-25).

This introduced fish exception (and related exceptions for game animals in early protected areas) emphasizes that national parks have a dual purpose which goes beyond simply protecting nature. Parks are preserved “in perpetuity” for both their “intrinsic worth” as well as “for the benefit, use and enjoyment of the public” (National Parks Act 1980, section 4). Preservation is arguably seen as a means to the ends of human benefit; protection of natural qualities is “fundamental to the use and enjoyment of parks by present and future generations.” Excepting “such conditions and restrictions as may be necessary for the preservation of native plants and animals or for the welfare in general of the parks,” the public is guaranteed “freedom of entry and access to the parks.”

Enabling “use and enjoyment” of parks thus also influences decisions about land use in parks. Facilities such as “shelter, toilets, signposting and car parking” are “basic requirements in catering for public use in national parks,” though buildings should be “designed to harmonise with the natural landscape” (National Parks Authority 1983, p. 45-46). Interpretive visitor centres provide a “focal point” by acquainting “visitors to the park with the park’s features, facilities and recreational opportunities,” though the total number of such centres has always been limited to at most a few per park, generally located in the larger of the nearby settlements, as illustrated in a map of current centres (Figure 5.1). For instance, the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre is in Te Anau; that for Westland/Tai Poutini in Franz Josef. (Today, an important exception is Haast Visitor Centre, but it was explicitly built to develop the tourism industry in South Westland as explored in Chapter 7). Educational use of parks is encouraged, “although where possible permanent accommodation for such parties should be located outside parks” (p. 32-33). Sites of “archaeological and historical interest” are preserved whenever possible, although this preservation receives minimal attention compared to maintaining natural qualities. Commercial businesses of certain types are allowed to operate in parks as long as they have a licence and use land in accordance with the management plan (p. 68).

In general, only land uses which specifically facilitate public use of parks and have minimal impact on nature in the parks are permitted, though sometimes avoiding inappropriate land use is ensured by redefining the area as non-park land rather than preventing the use. Networks of tracks and huts are provided for recreationalists (National Parks Authority 1983, p. 35). Roads for vehicle access similarly facilitate use, though they are to “be constructed to minimise impact on natural features.” In cases where public roads cross parks, the road is excluded from the park boundaries (p. 37). Similarly, aircraft access is permitted because it “can provide a means of access to and enjoyment of parks with minimal physical impact” but landing sites may be restricted “to keep the adverse effects of aircraft use in and over parks at a level compatible with the public enjoyment of the parks” (p. 40). Sometimes, however, using park land in incompatible ways (e.g. to transport electricity) is unavoidable because of their location. In those cases, conditions are to be set on the use to “ensure minimum disturbance” (p. 55).

To a large extent then, the General Policy 1983 ensures “appropriate balance” between the potentially conflicting goals of human use and nature preservation by spatially separating park land from non-park land. The same philosophy provides for creation of spatially distinct management zones within parks which can be managed under different rules. “Specially protected areas in national parks” and “wilderness areas” are zones where protection of nature receives greater priority (National Park Act 1980, section 12 and 15). Park boards are given the power “to restrict entry to the former and some activities in the latter.” Conversely, “amenities areas” are designated zones that may be more intensely developed “for recreational and related activities to facilitate the needs of park users” Within each park is a distinct “mix of such areas” determined by the park board during preparation of the individual park management plan (National Parks Authority 1986, p. 6).

The General Policy on National Parks 1983 thus tells a story of national parks as pristine nature. While certain uses of the landscape to facilitate human enjoyment are permitted, the primary function of parks is to preserve “outstanding natural quality” for future generations. When there is need to develop park land more intensely, the natural quality of park lands is most often ensured by defining such areas as outside the park boundaries. Within this 1980s conception of parks are two distinctly Pākehā ways of viewing mountainous land: as a resource for the benefit of humans and as a

landscape so special that it should be preserved untouched “in perpetuity.” Explaining these dual understandings of nature in general and mountains in particular requires examining their long historic roots in New Zealand as well as other western cultures.

Iconic but Worthless: Nineteenth Century Attitudes towards New World Mountains

When early European explorers first looked on the vast alpine lands of southwest New Zealand, they often stood beside the Ngāi Tahu who guided them. Despite relying on Māori geographical knowledge to navigate across the mountains known as Kā Tiritiri o te Moana, these first Pākehā explorers – and the settlers and travellers who followed them – saw the mountains they named the Southern Alps with European eyes (Waitangi Tribunal 1991, p. 186-190). The manner in which the rugged, high altitude landscapes of the southwest came to (arguably disproportionably) represent New Zealand and its people is thus explained by the geographical predominance of mountains as well as ways of seeing that came to New Zealand with early colonists.

Nineteenth century European (and especially English) ideas of nature were founded on a dichotomy between productive pastoral landscapes where humans lived and wilderness areas seen to exist outside of civilization (Kirby 1997, p. 32-37; also see Nash 2001, p. 8-43). Such a view of nature is rooted in particular European ways of understanding what separates humans from other animals and how civilization came about (Thomas 1983, p. 17-41; also see Pocock 1992). The separation of pastoral and wilderness assumes that history began with both humans and landscape in a state of nature following Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the Garden of Eden. In Protestant theology particularly, human labour redeems the original sin and “improves” God’s creation by reclaiming nature from its original pristine state (Thomas 1983, p. 17-41; also see Stoll 1997). Uncultivated land remains wilderness, but always with the potential to be improved through human work. As Europeans encountered new ‘wildernesses’ around the world, they tended to see these areas as left over from mythic past times.

Wilderness lands, especially those in mountains, had long inspired European fear as well as providing the promise of redemption. While real or imagined wild beasts and savage people were assumed to live in these landscapes of gloom, they also provided more direct access to the divine (Nicolson 1959). By the nineteenth century, however, the dichotomy between nature and culture had emerged into two seemingly opposite but actually quite related ways of viewing mountains (Schama 1995, p. 447-513). On the one hand, mountains remained “worthless lands,” left over areas that could not be made into farmland or otherwise improved (Runte 1979), and thus continued to inspire fear and loathing (Pawson 2002, p. 138). At the same time, eighteenth century Romanticism had translated loathing into the ‘pleasurable terror’ of the sublime. Mountains were still seen as untouched by humans, but greater emphasis was placed on untouched as meaning untainted or closer to God; mountain gloom was transformed into mountain glory (Nicolson 1959). By the nineteenth century, a host of multiple Romantic secular and religious associations of mountains as having moral value were common in Europe. Besides being expressed in literature and painting, Romantic ideas also inspired new demand for travel among the educated classes, whether in the English Lake District, the Alps, or mountains in the settler societies (Sears 1989). By the nineteenth century, demand for such travel gave mountain landscapes a new economic value as tourism sites, though even pristine alpine scenery had to be “improved” with appropriate transport and accommodation facilities to attract tourists.

The response of European settlers to the New Zealand landscape was influenced by both of these European cultural trends. Paul Shepard chronicles the multiplicity of European ideas and associations reflected in their perspectives (Shepard 1969). Throughout the country, the predominant early approach to nature was improvement and transformation (Pawson & Brooking 2002, p. 52-168; Park 1996; Arnold 1994); however, Romantic responses to nature are also apparent, particularly in early landscape painting (Pound 1983).

These two simultaneous trends influenced early decisions about use of alpine areas by both private individuals and the colonial state. The first explorers in the Southern Alps belong firmly in the improvement tradition (Pawson & Brooking 2002, p. 63-66). The purpose of their travels was to assess the productive potential of the interior high country. They mapped passes, noted navigable water ways, and assessed land available for agriculture and sheep stations. They were followed by

surveyors and then high country run holders who ‘improved’ the wild lands to establish “one of the finest sheep countries in the world” (John Turnbull Thompson 1857 as quoted in Pawson & Brooking 2002, p. 66). At the same time, later nineteenth century responses to the Southern Alps depict them as spaces of leisure and compare them to similar European alpine regions, mirroring responses to other New World mountains such as the Colorado Rockies.

Both these responses to the high country were European responses based upon an assumption that the land New Zealand colonists encountered – except in the specific areas where Māori settlements and gardens were present – was pristine *terra nullis* (Pawson & Cant 1992; also see Birch 1996). Colonists ignored existing Māori geographies of stories, which gave very different meanings to features like swamps, grassland, and mountains. Similarly, Māori geographies of use were wider, with greenstone and food gathering routes crossing the mountain regions while well into the twentieth century Europeans mainly skirted its edges (Chapter 6). Post-colonial scholarship has demonstrated that the nature-culture distinction and equation of non-European peoples with nature were fundamental to colonialism, particularly geographic exploration, mapping and surveying (Byrnes 2002; Livingstone 1992). The cultural colonization inherent in early European responses to the New Zealand environment was also present in conservation ideas based upon the separation of nature and culture.

Local Negotiations: Conservation and Preservation Efforts in Early New Zealand

As colonization progressed in New Zealand, the rapid transformation of the landscape that so quickly followed initial settlement prompted increasing calls to set aside certain lands. As Star & Lochhead (2002, p. 119) summarize, by the turn of the twentieth century, a “growing number” of the second generation of settlers were “question[ing] the direction of settler society...challeng[ing] the assumptions on which the rate and extent of the transformation were based, and...consider[ing] it vital to preserve an indigenous remnant.” Mirroring international trends but expressed in a variety of local

New Zealand ways, early attempts to set aside land from production arose from both a view of land as economic resource as well as moral concerns over the disappearance of untouched nature.¹¹

Concern that improvement was happening too fast and calls for wiser use of resources resulted from the drastic modification of the country in just one generation. Deforestation provides one poignant example, with 22 million forested acres in 1886 being reduced to 17 million by 1909 (Star & Lochhead 2002, p. 119). Looking around at the “exceeding joy” with which New Zealanders burned native bush, international visitors, colonial officials, and New Zealanders familiar with deforestation overseas (especially in North America) were horrified and called for regulation to prevent the waste of valuable timber (Pawson & Brooking 2002, p. 111-114; also see Wynn 2004). The first legislation was passed in 1874; by 1909 the 1885 State Forests Act had set aside over two million acres of forest, intended for eventual milling.

Other efforts to set aside land from production resulted from fears of the moral effect on the nation if pristine areas and especially the native flora and fauna were to disappear entirely. The speed of transformation meant that within a generation or two the children or grandchildren of the first colonists were living in a vastly different world. Instead of feeling hemmed in by the oppressive bush, they nostalgically mourned the passing of the days when forests stretched across the islands. Initially many New Zealanders had been more Darwinian than Darwin (Livingstone 2005), viewing the eventual disappearance of native species as natural and inevitable (though at the same time colonial nationalism co-opted indigenous emblems). By the early twentieth century, indigenous nature had widely come to represent the nation (Pawson & Brooking 2002, p. 122-123, 139-143). In 1898 the nation’s first pictorial postage stamps were issued using images of iconic mountain lands including Milford Sound and Mount Cook, expressing what had already become a well-established practice of using mountains like those in southwest New Zealand to symbolize the nation as a whole. Legislation too was shaped by the link between land and national identity; in 1892, for instance, the Land Act explicitly allowed the reserve of land for scenic qualities (Star & Lochhead 2002, p. 119-127).

Various individuals as well as legislation sought to protect birds “characteristic of the country” like

¹¹ These two underlying reasons for reserving land are sometimes distinguished as conservation and preservation, although usage of the term conservation in New Zealand today combines the two, a convention I have followed in this thesis in using them as synonyms.

the tui and kiwi (Canterbury Superintendent William Rolleston as quoted in Galbreath 2002, p. 38). These laws were shaped by European definitions of which species were valuable, however, and thus one consequence was to make illegal Māori customary use of certain important food species while allowing hunting of species Europeans considered game birds (Galbreath 2002, p. 43-47).

A second reason for desires to preserve land was the growing value placed on outdoor recreation and the realization that tourism could bring significant economic benefits from lands that otherwise were worthless (Star & Lochhead 2002, p. 123-127). Romantic conceptions and early twentieth century movements to promote sports and recreation gave mountains value as places for mountaineering, tramping, and viewing scenery (Macfarlane 2003; Ross 2002). Beginning in the 1870s, specific sites in southwest New Zealand like Milford, Mount Cook, and (outside the present world heritage area) Queenstown attracted attention from Victorian travellers. Mt Cook was visited not only by genteel travellers interested in scenery, but also members of the growing international mountaineering community, including women (Pearce 1980; Morin, Longhurst & Johnston 2001). Similarly, visiting Milford Sound by sea was a popular journey from the 1880s; the Milford Track, developed from 1888, soon became known throughout the world. Tourism came later to the Westland glaciers, though they were still among the earlier destinations in New Zealand. The first hotel opened at Franz Josef in 1897 and developed into the centre of a guiding business after being bought by the Grahams in 1911, though the region did not receive much attention until the 1930s due to its remoteness (Pawson 2002, p. 149; also see McCormack 1999).

Southwest New Zealand's tourist areas were among the earliest protected landscapes, though official national park status came only after 1952. In 1885, the Hooker Valley near Mount Cook was designated a recreation reserve; the Tasman Valley was added two years later. Most of the islands off the Fiordland coast were reserved in the early 1890s; over 900,000 hectares on the mainland was reserved for national park purposes in 1905 (though not formally gazetted nor actively managed until 1952). Preservation in the glacier region, like tourism there, was a bit later, with the first scenic reserve established at Franz Josef in 1915. Actual numbers of visitors, though, in all these areas remained small until well into the twentieth century, with lack of transport or other development long

confining tourism and recreational use to specific areas on the edges of the larger mountainous region (McClure 2004, p. 7-92; Pawson 2002, p. 140-141; Pearce 1980).

Preservation for tourism, however, was only supported to the extent that it did not conflict with settlement goals, contrary to the anachronistic tendency found in many histories of protected areas to assume nineteenth century preservationists understood reserves in modern ways. Early protected reserves were primarily located in economically marginal lands such as mountains and off-shore islands. As late as 1980, “less than 0.5% of New Zealand’s area [had] been designated National Park or Reserve in preference to a use foregone” (Molloy 1980 as cited in Pawson 2002, p. 150).

By the 1920s, support from domestic tramping clubs had joined tourism as a reason to preserve land (Ross 2002). Whether based around tourism or club recreation, early calls for preservation were fundamentally utilitarian, not so much precluding human transformation of scenic landscapes as calling for a certain kind of leisure-oriented improvement. To make alpine lands suitable for human enjoyment necessitated the construction of roads, tracks, huts, and hotels. The tramping clubs were a major source of the labour that physically built today’s recreation landscape, constructing many of the initial huts, tracks, and ski fields. Private entrepreneurs like those who built Mt. Cook’s Hermitage or the Grahams on the West Coast as well as the government’s Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, created in 1901, played a similar role through construction of hotels and other facilities (McClure 2004).

Early efforts to conserve land for later improvement and preserve it in a minimally improved natural state for leisure or to maintain national identity were not clearly delineated, with reserves often meeting multiple goals. These multiple trends present in early protected areas in New Zealand mirror similar processes happening in other settler societies, as Sax (1980) demonstrated for the United States. Environmental ideas around the world were shaped by an international context of intellectual networks circulating news of developments elsewhere, but were expressed differently in different locations (Livingstone 2005; Wynn 2004). For the first half of the twentieth century, negotiations over meanings and use of protected lands in New Zealand played out in variable local ways. Understandings of types of reserves remained fluid, with the choice of legal classification and its subsequent impact depending “on local officials and the conditions in which they worked” (Star &

Lochhead 2002, p. 119; Pawson & Brooking 2002, p. 113). The creation of New Zealand's first national park provides an illustrative example of how wider ideas were used in specific local circumstances.

The first national park in the world was Yellowstone National Park, created by an act of the US Congress in 1872. The first comprehensive academic history of New Zealand parks by W.W. Harris (1974, p. 34) demonstrated that the Yellowstone model of a nation's park captured the imagination of influential New Zealanders such as George Fox in the 1870s. However, the story of how "the seed planted in Wyoming was transplanted to both islands of New Zealand" as told by Roderick Nash (1970) and echoed by Harris, who made much use of Nash's work, is somewhat simplistic, as it portrays "the American invention of national parks" as evidence of American exceptionalism. A more nuanced story of the origins of New Zealand parks like I am suggesting is hinted at in Te Ara, the online Encyclopedia of New Zealand being co-ordinated by the Ministry for Culture & Heritage. Te Ara portrays the idea as a distinct variation of a wider trend:

"People in other New World countries saw that the awe-inspiring natural features of national parks could offer a substitute for the cathedrals and palaces of Europe....In New Zealand, there were added reasons for creating national parks...Growing support for national parks among some Pākehā and the desire of Māori to protect their land, provided the context for the creation of New Zealand's first national park" (Swarbrick 2007).

Māori involvement in the beginning of parks presents a stark contrast to the U.S., where tribes were physically removed to create protected areas such as Glacier National Park (Spence 1999). Further testament to the unique beginnings of New Zealand's park system is the cultural world heritage status of Tongariro, partially based on its status as the first national park (system) in the world gifted by an indigenous people.

The story of the first national park in New Zealand, Tongariro, generally begins with the 1887 gift by Ngāti Tūwharetoa Paramount Chief Horonuku Te Heuheu to the Crown of three volcanic mountains in the centre of the North Island. In 1894, the gifted land surrounding the summits of Tongariro, Ruapehu, and Ngauruhoe was, along with additional area purchased by the Crown, gazetted as New Zealand's first national park. Te Heuheu intended the gift to prevent the desecration of tapu (sacred) lands on the volcanic summits and thus protect his mana and that of his people. Explanations of how Te Heuheu came to use European conceptions of pristine nature for his own

purposes and understand a gift to the Crown to create a national park as a way out of his dilemma vary, however, depending on who is telling the story. Some versions give the credit to Te Heuheu and others emphasize how he was persuaded or even pressured by various Pakeha officials. As the twentieth century progressed, stories of the gift tended to minimize Te Heuheu's role and celebrate the natural qualities preserved in the park, following the lead first established by scientist Leonard Cockayne (Kirby 1997, p. 84-92).

As Kirby's analysis of the evolving multiple versions of heritage present in Tongariro in the first half of the twentieth century makes clear, for many years the purpose of national parks as well as other reserved lands like those in southwest New Zealand was locally negotiated rather than being clearly defined. The local specificity of the Tongariro negotiation is further emphasized by noting that in many other cases including Fiordland – which the Crown believed it had acquired in the 1853 Murihiku purchase understood differently by Ngāi Tahu – reserved land was not gifted by Māori but acquired through a variety of means that Māori experienced as dispossession (O'Regan 1989). Histories like Harris', written after the creation of a unified national park system that consciously resembled those found in North America, tend to hint at but minimize the distinct characteristics of early New Zealand national parks and preservation movements, which continue to influence understandings of parks to the present. In contrast to the U.S., where the National Park Service provided a central vision for national parks beginning in 1916, until 1952 each New Zealand park was gazetted under its own legislation and administered as a unique unit by a citizen park board. Some reserved areas (e.g. Peel Forest Park) were similarly managed by citizen boards while others (e.g. Fiordland) remained essentially unmanaged (Stokdijk 1988; also see Milne 2002).

Similarly, management approaches in these years were not standardized across parks or other types of protected areas. Choices about land use in this era display location-specific combinations of efforts to improve nature as well as preserve flora and fauna, as Te Ara makes clear:

“In the early 20th century, axis and red deer were released in Tongariro National Park and wapiti [elk] in Fiordland to provide sport for hunters. Meanwhile, goats were allowed to roam the slopes of Mt Taranaki (Mt Egmont). The damage these animals caused to native plants was a continuing problem. From about 1914 to 1920, heather and lupins were sown to ‘beautify’ Tongariro National Park. This horrified scientists such as Leonard Cockayne, who thought parks should be sanctuaries for native plants and animals” (Swarbrick 2007).

Cases where Cockayne's idea of parks as sanctuaries for indigenous flora and fauna had more influence include Arthur's Pass and Abel Tasman National Parks, created respectively in 1929 and 1942, though providing recreation for Christchurch trampers was also important in Arthur's Pass.

By the 1930s and 1940s, two dominant lobbies had emerged who focused their attention on national parks. These two dedicated groups of supporters were recreationalists, most vocally represented by the Federated Mountain Clubs (FMC), and preservationists who wanted to protect native species, whose views were advanced by the New Zealand Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society. Neither group was satisfied with the organic system of administration that existed. They viewed local variation as a threat to what they interpreted as the true purpose of parks and saw – in the words of a later director of the system they helped create – “grave weaknesses in the existing administrative framework...New Zealand had national parks but no co-ordinated national park system or policy, and resources in money and manpower were almost non-existent” (Lucas 1971, p. 8).

Influenced by the example of other settler societies, they worked hard to, in the words of Jane Thomson's whiggish DLS history on *The Origins of the 1952 Park Act*, bring New Zealand “into line with other advanced countries” (Thomson 1976, p. 3). In 1945, FMC produced a report explicitly comparing New Zealand park management (unfavourably) to the U.S. and Canada. In 1949, another joint proposal by FMC and Forest & Bird similarly declared centralized administration necessary to meet the protection goals which (they believed) had inspired the creation of parks. By 1952, almost twenty years of lobbying by this small minority had gradually convinced the Department of Lands and Survey of the need for reform. The National Park Act 1952 created a uniform system of park boards and the National Parks Authority to oversee them. It also explicitly provided for Forest & Bird and FMC (and Royal Society of New Zealand) input into management decisions (Lucas 1971, p. 8; also see Stokdijk 1988, p. 19-119).

By “for the first time” making “explicit” “a dual purpose of nature conservation and recreation,” the National Parks Act 1952 codified the way FMC and Forest & Bird understood national parks into a definition universal throughout New Zealand (Thomson 1976, p. 4). From 1952 forward, decisions about land use in each national park would be shaped not only by pre-existing place-meanings in the individual area but by a nationwide park story. DLS would work hard to ensure

that protected areas meeting the dual purposes of parks like those in southwest New Zealand were formally brought into the system while reinforcing appropriate use in existing parks and excluding from park status developed areas like highways as described in the General Policy 1983. While understandings of parks would continue to evolve, place-meanings in any given park would be primarily determined by negotiations over the national definition.

Protecting Nature and Promoting Recreation: The Post-1952 National Park System

All four of the southern mountainous parks that today comprise Te Wāhipounamu were officially established in the post-1952 period under the new act. Table 5.1 gives the years of gazettal as well as previous legal status of the land; Figure 3.1 mapped their locations within the present world heritage listing. Gazetting these areas linked place-meanings in southwest New Zealand to larger understandings of parks. At the same time, creating Fiordland, Mt Cook, and Westland National Park brought existing iconic tourist areas within the fledgling national park system. The 1959 series of postage stamps depicting national parks (which echo the 1898 series) reflects the resulting reinforcement of evolving national understandings of parks as symbols of national identity and spaces of leisure.

Table 5.1: Years of First Protection and National Park Status

National Park	Land First Reserved	Official Gazettal as Park
Fiordland	1890s (various islands) 1905 (bulk)	1952
Aoraki/Mt Cook	1885 (Hooker Valley) 1887 (Tasman Valley)	1953
Westland/Tai Poutini	1915 (Franz Josef) 1930 (Fox and Copeland)	1960
Mt Aspiring	1911 (Routeburn Valley)	1964

In Mount Aspiring, established latest of the four, the national park story had more impact on shaping local place-meanings in a previously less-known area. This effect is captured by one of the first pamphlets interpreting Mount Aspiring, the 1965 “Introducing Mount Aspiring National Park” (DLS 1965). Its purpose was to acquaint the public with the new national park status of “the mountain playground” between Fiordland and Mount Cook National Parks. Although the area, “contains some of the finest mountain scenery in New Zealand,” it had been “comparatively unknown to the general public” to that point. This brochure explains that the new park had been “set aside so that you can receive inspiration, enjoyment, and recreation in full measure.” The topics it covers reinforce the understanding of the area as a newly developed recreational resource, explaining how recent road completions allow people to access Mount Aspiring and also mentioning the anticipated economic benefits from the creation of the park.

Representations of the southwest parks in interpretation publications in these years reflect the extent to which the meaning of each park had come to be dependent on its membership in the larger park system.¹² Kirby (1997, p. 92) observed a similar shift in Tongariro stories, where the 1965 guidebook deemphasized Tongariro as a unique place in favour of portraying Tongariro as one national park among many. The same view is reflected in the common use of the metaphor of national parks as New Zealand’s “crown jewels;” the value of each jewel is less important than its membership in the collection.

An understanding of the parks as a rationalized system had been an explicit goal of the National Parks Act 1952 and was reinforced by the unified management structure. In addition to the National Parks Authority’s central strategic guidance, day-to-day management under the ranger corps contributed to a uniform nationwide understanding. The sense of shared mission and esprit de corps among the rangers is captured by a 1979 ranger recruitment brochure, which recruited staff to the national park system rather than to individual parks (DLS 1979). The same collective conception is reflected in the 1966 Encyclopedia of New Zealand, which describes the history and management of each park only within context of the larger park system and which explains how the National Parks

¹² Historic interpretation materials produced by DLS and the individual Park Boards are available in the Ephemera files of the Alexander Turnbull library.

Act of 1952 arose from a desire to “achieve uniformity in policy and management” (“National Parks” 1966).

While administrators and parks staff at the time celebrated this standardization of management as a sign of progress, Kirstie Ross’ post-colonial history of the National Parks Act 1952 interprets the creation of the park system as a means of consolidating Pākehā control over land. She portrays the National Parks Authority as a “body designed to enforce the physical and philosophical definition of national parks” and “decide what development was appropriate” (Ross 1999, p. 100). Ross’ work emphasizes the degree to which administration of the parks as a unified system solidified place-meanings in these areas and linked them to identity:

“In the context of a national park, imported plant life and animals were not signs of civilisation; they were the legacy of colonial carelessness. The vestiges of acclimatisation had to be removed to erase signs of hybridity. National Parks were required to display the indigenous, for the national and the indigenous were conflated. Civilised behaviour as defined by the [National Park Authority] required an appreciation of natural, indigenous scenes” (p. 118).

Through policies like exterminating non-native species such as deer, these national place-meanings were physically translated into the local landscape. Management decisions in southwest New Zealand emerged from the ways individual park boards implemented national policies. While local variations – such as the methods, success and extent of deer culling depending on the terrain – existed, these local expressions were varying implementations of or exceptions to default national rules.

Ross also points out that part of the story of national parks was a sense of shared progress with other settler nations. For instance, she interprets the 1959 stamp series as simultaneously a reminder of New Zealand’s pioneer history and as “rejection of pioneering attitudes, proof that New Zealanders themselves were civilised and matched other ‘advanced countries’” (Ross 1999, p. 118). DLS explicitly saw its work to develop and administer a national structure for the New Zealand national parks as paralleling that of rangers and park administrators in other settler nations (and later the wider world).

This trans-national view of parks was maintained by links between park staff. One of a number who took a study tour through U.S. and Canadian parks was P.H.C. (Bing) Lucas, Assistant

Director General of DLS and Director of Parks and Reserves. Lucas summarized his time as a Churchill Fellow in a report of his study tour (Lucas 1970). Besides explicitly listing lessons for New Zealand parks, Lucas' description of his interaction with U.S. rangers suggests they saw their work as advancing a common preservationist agenda throughout the world. While initially focused on North America, these links between staff became global as the "Yellowstone model" was adopted throughout the world. The First World Conference on National Parks held in Seattle 1962 represented the first global gathering. However, a particularly close relationship existed with the U.S., as demonstrated by the exchange programme between the ranger training courses at Lincoln College (now Lincoln University) and Colorado State University (Alex Miller, pers comm., 21/3/07).

As a result of a shared conception of the meanings of parks and conscious modelling on U.S. National Park Service policies, parks in New Zealand in many ways came to resemble those in the U.S. For example, interpretive visitor centres at each park introduced visitors to the area and told the park's story. However, DLS staff did not uncritically follow U.S. models. Rather, they sought to learn from mistakes that had been made abroad and adapt international practices to a uniquely New Zealand parks system. Lucas (1970, p. 25) for instance believed that New Zealand's hut system and citizen involvement in parks were preferable to the tent camping and federal control of the U.S. Another key example is legislation related to wilderness areas; the American Wilderness Act of 1964 only requires roadless areas. Believing this to be insufficient protection, when New Zealand parks designated wilderness areas, they specified such areas must be trackless as well as roadless (Cessford 2001).

The sense of being engaged in a common enterprise with North American park staff carried over into early histories of New Zealand parks, which uncritically celebrate parks as progress. Lucas' brief account of *The Origins and Structure of National Parks in New Zealand* (Lucas 1971, p. 3) introduces "the national park idea" by explaining the similar origin of parks "both world-wide and in New Zealand." Lucas' history parallels Harris' in its portrayal of conservation as an inevitable and unquestionably desirable project whose late implementation may be explained by the way "political leaders of the day [1894]" did not "altogether grasp[]" "the concept of a national park as a great natural area to be available for public use and enjoyment as far as possible consistent with its preservation" (p. 6). These histories mirrored (and often drew on) the work of American historian

Roderick Nash, who celebrated national parks as a place for Americans to encounter wilderness and portrayed their development as inevitable (Nash 1967). Thus the trend in New Zealand historiography to overemphasize the similarities of the New Zealand and American park systems may be explained by the way those writing these histories in the mid-twentieth century understood national parks as a universal movement.

Through the second half of the twentieth century, place-meanings in southwest New Zealand evolved along with national and international understandings of protected areas. The cumulative impact of the evolution over these years is captured in the revised National Park Act 1980 and the 1983 general policy. While a comprehensive academic history tracing these evolutions has yet to be written, Te Ara explains that the National Park Act 1980 “addressed scientific and conservation concerns” and thus hints at two explanations for the shifts (Swarbrick 2007).

First, by the later twentieth century the previously-compatible dual mandate of parks to protect nature and provide for human use seemed to be conflicting. On the one hand, demand for greater facilities in parks grew with the “back country boom” in recreation (Mason 1974). On the other, ideas about what protecting nature meant expanded with the growing influence of the science of ecology. Whereas in earlier times the location of parks was determined by lack of other productive economic use, new calls to protect biodiversity implied creating parks in potentially economically valuable ecosystems such as wetlands. To a certain extent, the new importance of scientific reasons for protecting parks led to a shift in the emphasis between use and protection. The National Parks Act 1980 provision for creating special and wilderness areas of restricted use reflects this shift, as does the creation of new parks based on ecological concerns such as Paparoa in 1987.

A second factor changing the park story is that by 1980 the public was demanding more of a role in determining how parks would be managed. The state had long played a major role in both development and conservation of New Zealand land (Pawson & Brooking 2002, p.183-199). In the 1970s, a number of high profile cases including the battle over raising the level of Lake Manapouri led New Zealanders to question agency decisions and demand more say in determining which activities were permitted in national parks. These concerns are reflected in the the 1980 act and the General Policy 1983, which emphasizes transparent policy-making and seeking public input. That the

Manapouri debate was over use of national parks rather than Fiordland in particular and that it precipitated changes in the national story of parks, however, emphasizes the extent to which place-meanings in southwest New Zealand remained tied to system-wide understandings and policies.

Wider conservation concerns also led to restructuring of the parks administration agencies. DoC replaced DLS as the agency responsible for parks in 1987 and in 1990 the citizen park boards were integrated into a wider system of conservation boards overseen by the National Conservation Authority. This restructuring has had two seemingly opposite effects. On the one hand, DoC is a devolved agency, with a great deal of variation between local conservancies (Chapter 7). On the other, national parks today are less a distinctive type of place managed by a distinct agency than one classification of conservation land among the many managed by regional conservation boards and DoC. While policies remain distinct in different flavours of protected areas, the common green and yellow signing and colloquial references to “DoC land” suggest the extent of the wider public’s understanding of the distinctions is questionable. Similarly, former DLS rangers lament the way the “crown jewels” have been submerged into the wider conservation estate.

The final source of recent change in the park story suggested by Te Ara is Māori dissatisfaction. Te Ara specifically uses the example of Tuhoe in Te Urewera, but the story of indigenous critiques of national parks’ basic assumptions about the separation between nature and culture during the 1990s and to the present is shared internationally.

A Global Critique of the Yellowstone Preservation Model

The end of the twentieth century saw global movements by indigenous peoples, including demands for recognition of conservation as culturally specific to Europeans and input into environmental management. While indigenous resistance to colonization and memory of histories of dispossession remained constant in various settler societies from the time of European contact forward (e.g. Mihesuah 1998, p. 27-36), indigenous peoples’ struggles with settler society governments became increasingly political and increasingly successful from the 1960s (Pawson & Cant 1992).

Reasons for the increased momentum include post-war urbanization, demographic recovery of populations, a new generation of indigenous intellectuals, and the global context of decolonization (Pawson & Cant 1992, p. 101-102).

European resource management frameworks had long marginalized indigenous ways of viewing and interacting with the non-human world. At best, they had assumed indigenous environmental management was unscientific and thus inadequate. At worst, they had viewed indigenous peoples as a cause of degradation. As a result of indigenous critiques, increasing respect for traditional environmental knowledge (TEK) developed, along with efforts to move towards co-management of resources (Usher 2000; Augustine 1997). Among administrators of protected areas as well as academics, these broader political changes in resource management led to critical questioning of the Yellowstone model of preservation and a new recognition that it is founded on a western idea of nature as separate from culture.

Changing global views on the role of people in protected areas is apparent by examining the focus of successive World Park Congresses (IUCN 2003). The First and Second World Conferences on National Parks, held in Seattle and Yellowstone in 1962 and 1972 respectively, focused on promoting the need to establish protected areas and sharing best practices to cope with common management challenges, which were often seen as being caused by inappropriate human use. These global gatherings of park managers and scholars helped created the shared sense of an international movement described above. The Third World Congress on National Parks in Bali in 1982 turned the focus to linking management of protected areas management with broader sustainable development goals. The focus on people continued to increase, with the Fourth Congress in Venezuela in 1992 concluding that “the relationship between people and [protected areas] is too often ignored” and that “social, cultural, economic and political issues are not peripheral to [protected areas] but are central to them” (IUCN 2003). Reflecting global indigenous peoples movements of the 1990s, the Fifth Congress, held in South Africa in 2003, integrated indigenous peoples into the official discussion process, implicitly recognizing the culture of colonialism that had shaped protected areas policymaking at previous Congress. The 2003 Congress called for “an increased role for indigenous

peoples at the discussion table, shaping 'official' outputs" as well as "an expanded concept of protected areas to include spiritual and sacred values" (WRI 2003).

As indigenous voices joined the conversations, academics too had to "confront comfortable Eurocentric assumptions" in their work (Pawson & Cant 1992, p. 95). Increasingly, historians and geographers recognized that "the making of the European 'New World,' in reality the appropriation of new landscapes into which to extend an existing world, was far more problematic than is often assumed" (Pawson & Cant 1992, p. 95). Within this new historical context, science and environmentalism become not universal but specific ways of knowing that emerged from European experiences of imperialism and colonialism (Pickstone 2001; Ross 1999, Grove 1995; Livingstone 1992).

Within these broader revisions, older uncritical celebrations of parks as universal progress were no longer tenable. Post-colonial histories of parks thus stress that the "transformation of parts of the landscape into a well-organised park system is another, important, example of the ongoing process of cultural and social reform through landscape appropriation" (Ross 1999, p. 92; also see Neumann 1998; Carruthers 1997). In the U.S. historiography, this new story of parks has received much attention as a lens for understanding wider nineteenth and twentieth century social trends. Historians have specifically explored the link between evolving meanings of parks and changes in park management (e.g. Louter 2006) and the way parks creation was experienced by Native Americans (e.g. Jacoby 2001; Spence 1999).

While New Zealand has seen a parallel interest in conservation as cultural colonization (e.g. Galbreath 2002), writing a new parks story analogous to that being told in the U.S. has received considerably less attention from academic historians, perhaps reflecting recent lesser emphasis on national parks as distinct types of places following their incorporation into the wider conservation estate. Ross' (1999) M.A. thesis is the only substantial post-colonial history of parks to date. While she persuasively critiques a "historiography dominated by nationalistic concerns and progress rather than continuity" and the way "national park history canonises and essentialises its activists," Ross does not explore past the 1950s and focuses on the textual colonisation of the National Parks Act 1952 rather than on actual use of the landscape (Ross 1999, p. 122 and p. 17). The biggest source of

alternate stories of parks has been evidence presented before the Waitangi Tribunal (Chapter 6), though similar statements were occasionally made earlier in other forums. For instance, Sir Tipene O'Regan emphasized the way history as presented in park interpretation materials marginalizes indigenous people to a 1984 DLS-sponsored parks management conference (DLS 1984).

Since the National Park Act 1980, then, there has been a shift in the official national park story to incorporate Māori perspectives in response to the Treaty clause of the 1987 Conservation Act. This change is evident by comparing Te Ara's article on national parks to its 1966 counter-part (Swarbrick 2007; "National Parks" 1966). Another example is the increased attention to Māori cultural values in the definition of parks in the General Policy for National Parks 2005, the first revision since the General Policy 1983 (National Conservation Authority 2005). Perhaps the most poignant evocation of this changing story and its corresponding change in place-meanings of southwest New Zealand, however, is looking at how interpretation materials have evolved over time.

In the first pamphlet promoting Mt Aspiring (DLS 1965) already described, Māori or their connections with the area are not mentioned except for describing how burning the "wilderness of flax, fern and cabbage trees" encountered by early Europeans up the Makarora River valley exposed the ruins of a village. The rest of the history of the area is a litany of which Pakeha explorers first saw, named, and climbed which mountains and valleys. The same equating of park history with Pakeha exploration with no mention of Māori is apparent in the 1975 "Mount Aspiring National Park Information" pamphlet (Mt Aspiring Park Board 1975) which equates the value of the park with its "outstanding" alpine landscape.

Ignoring Māori entirely in telling the story of the Park's history was no longer possible by the mid-1980s, when a pamphlet (DLS 1985a) specifically on the history of "Exploration of the Aspiring Region" was produced. However, Māori exploration seems only to interest the storyteller so much as it facilitates later European exploration: "without the intimate Māori knowledge of the back country the European exploration that was to follow would have been much more difficult." This pamphlet's heroic celebration of the Pakeha surveyors, explorers, and climbers in the region certainly places it as well within the tradition which Ross (1999) critiqued of nationalist histories of parks that perpetrate colonial power relations. However, its description of Māori names, intimate knowledge, and long

association with this alpine region represents a significant change from the silence of the 1965 or 1975 pamphlet. The change probably reflects a wider shift in National Parks Authority policy that Māori names for features were to be highlighted (National Parks Authority 1983, p. 33).

The story of Mt Aspiring's history and the amount of emphasis past human use of the landscape receives in interpretation materials continued to evolve once DoC was created. A 1992 brochure (DoC 1992) on the Matukituki Valley Tracks, for instance, devotes the same amount of text to describing the area's human history as its natural history. The story in this brochure is predominantly a story of sustained Māori connection, describing how Kati Mamoe and Kai Tahu used the inland Otago lakes to obtain kai and other resources. Pounamu sources at the head of Lake Wanaka and the usefulness of the lakes in mental maps used for crossing to the West Coast are also mentioned. The 1992 text is almost identical to that available from DoC today (DoC n.d.).

A Shifting Balance: Stories of “This Place” vs. “This Type of Place”

This chapter has argued that place-meanings in southwest New Zealand have been influenced by wider European ideas of nature since Māori guided the first Pākehā explorers. Negotiation over dual European understandings of the pristine translated into variable local conservation and preservation efforts in the first half of the twentieth century, including different areas with common legal status as national parks. The National Park Act 1952 resulted from successful lobbying by groups who believed such local negotiations often resulted in land use contrary to the “true” purpose of parks. With the formal gazetting of the four southwest parks in the post-1952 period, place-meanings of this area became intimately linked to national and international understandings. With its legal status still that laid out in the National Park Act 1980, negotiation over land use in this area remains heavily influenced by larger developments in protected areas management. Because of the shared vision of parks in the years of DLS, the historiography of New Zealand parks tends to minimize how the New Zealand park system developed in its own particular fashion, though influenced by wider trends.

Histories, like other stories and the place-meanings they shape, exist always as dialogue between the global and the local, between a larger history and multiple histories. Place-meanings in southwest New Zealand are simultaneously the result of stories of its specific places and larger stories of types of place; the important question is how to understand the interaction between the two in any given location and era. The emphasis on the national in my story of southwest New Zealand may well minimize important differences between individual parks. While variations between park boards certainly existed, the nature and extent of local distinctions remains largely unexplored; empirical research outside the scope of this current project might well inspire a different emphasis. Existing park histories are written predominantly at the scale of the nation, either placing New Zealand parks within an international movement like those already described or else uncritically celebratory like that produced for the New Zealand park centennial in 1987 (Thom 1987). Even Ross' post-colonial story does not explicitly consider variation between parks. Limited by the existing scholarship, I struggled to write this chapter. Like Cronon's Dust Bowl authors, I have recast the facts from existing national histories into a new story of how place-meanings in southwest New Zealand became synonymous with four national parks.

The possibility of another understanding of the evolutions present in recent years is suggested, however, by two different ways of painting the 1992 Matukituki valley brochure. On the one hand, the change from silence to stories of long use demonstrates Mt Aspiring was influenced by a global movement towards recognizing the significance of land to indigenous peoples. But recognizing significance to indigenous *peoples* in the plural represents a move away from universal understandings. The story of the Mutukituki valley is also a particular one of how Ngāi Tahu and specifically Kati Mamoe moved around certain lakes. This same paradox was recognized by Pocock's (1997, p. 266) discussion of the UNESCO cultural landscapes criterion, where he points out that world heritage today still rests on the assumption that it is possible to compare the incomparable culture of every state. This wider vision recognizing local human relationships in protected areas could be said to represent a global trend towards celebrating heritage as particular expressions of local – and especially indigenous – culture. While southwest New Zealand's four parks are still primarily areas to protect nature, the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 placed an official overlay of Ngāi

Tahu values on the landscape. The next chapter explores both the Ngāi Tahu geography of stories that was obscured by colonization and the restoration of these place-specific meanings as a result of the Ngāi Tahu claim before the Waitangi Tribunal.

Chapter Six

Negotiating Place-Meanings: Ngāi Tahu Stories' Evolving Role in Conservation

New stories of national parks make clear that preservation movements were part of larger processes of alienating indigenous peoples from their land. However, recognizing dispossession in the national park story does not automatically change contemporary place meanings; power between storytellers fundamentally influences whether such stories are translated into dominant meanings. Histories narrated in the process of moving towards a legal settlement of grievances become sites of negotiation between storytellers. Thus history in New Zealand today serves not only as a way of explaining existing cultural meanings, but also as an explicitly political means of remaking meaning.¹³

In this chapter, I evoke the range of stories in Te Wāhipounamu World Heritage Area that were obscured by European colonization but remained alive in Ngāi Tahu memory. In telling these stories, I use official documents produced in the settling of the Ngāi Tahu claim. I reflectively consider how researcher power and insider/outsider status influence cross-cultural academic storytelling. I explain how the Waitangi Tribunal process has brought stories that were long marginalized into official representations of conservation land. Specifically, I explore ways the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 legislated the incorporation of Ngāi Tahu values into storytelling in southwest New Zealand. I also examine the slow, difficult, and uneven process by which these expanded official stories are beginning to reshape place meanings and land use decisions.

¹³ In this chapter as well as throughout the thesis, I use te reo names (e.g. Aoraki) when specifically discussing Ngāi Tahu's geography of stories. (I have followed the choices made by original authors of my sources in my use or non-use of southern dialect spellings.) Elsewhere I use legal place names (e.g. Aoriaki/Mt Cook) because they reflect the place-meanings in official stories. The importance of choices about name usage in academic writing is emphasized by comparing my approach with Hemmingsen (2004), whose use of dual Māori/Pākehā names throughout (e.g. Aotearoa/New Zealand) reinforces her theoretical approach.

A Ngāi Tahu Geography of Stories in Southwest New Zealand

The people now known as Ngāi Tahu whanui claim manawhenua (tribal authority) over the majority of Te Waipounamu (the South Island) (Figure 6.1). Their ancestors migrated to New Zealand from East Polynesia some thousand years ago. Today's iwi is a blending of “three main streams of descent,” linked by a “complex interweaving of cause and effect” in traditional histories of “steady



movement southward, triggered by a variety of motives, conflict, marriage, the need for resources, even the simple zest for discovery” (O’Regan 1989, pg 234; see also Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (TRoNT) 2008, “Who We Are”). The most ancient of the three, the Waitaha people established Ngāi Tahu’s “southern whakapapa (genealogy);” they are the ones “who named the land” and “who planted the seeds of our tribally unique mythology in Te Waipounamu” (O’Regan 1989, p. 234).

The other two groups that comprise today’s iwi migrated from the more densely-populated North Island. Ngāti Mamoe were descendants of Whatua Mamoe, whose territory was the Heretaunga region on the eastern coast around today’s city of Napier. “Drawn south” in the mid-sixteenth century first to the coast near Wellington and then across Cook Strait “by the abundant bird, eel, and fish resources of the Wairau estuaries and lagoons,” Ngāti Mamoe gradually “came to dominate Waitaha, more by strategic marriages than by war” (O’Regan 1989, p 237). The story of the seventeenth century “is one of conflict, of peacemaking, and intermarriage” between Ngati Mamoe and the mixture of North Island peoples who “over a span of about two generations” migrated from the eastern North Island to Te Waipounamu. Gradually they bonded into the “reasonably unitary tribe” known as Ngāi Tahu (p. 238).

For the last thousand years, the ancestors of modern Ngāi Tahu used, named, and became intimately familiar with the landscapes of southwest New Zealand. Arriving with their crops from the smaller, tropical islands of East Polynesia, the earliest people in the South Island blended gardening where possible with hunting and gathering. While the North Island climate permitted growing kumara, taro, yam, and hue (gourds), in Te Waipounamu kumura was only reliably grown as far south as Taumutu and perhaps Timaru (O’Regan 1989, p. 235). As a result, southern communities “traveled in small groups over large areas, gardening where they could, and hunting, gathering, and fishing on a seasonal round.” Between themselves and with North Island tribes they enjoyed rich trade relationships, with stones such as pounamu, foodstuffs, and other goods moving across Te Waipounamu (p. 236).

Some 20,000 Ngāi Tahu “connected by a closely woven mesh of whakapapa” lived in “widely separated settlements kāinga, (or kaika in the southern dialect)” throughout most of Te Waipounamu by 1800. A political organization knit together by marriage alliances “gave Ngāi Tahu

singular characteristics not so evident in most northern Māori tribes” (O'Regan p. 238). Hapu (sub-tribe) affiliations were less important in settlements structured “around locational and residential factors.” This “multi-hapu affiliation” style of tribal organization is still evident today (p. 238).

The Treaty of Waitangi was signed by Ngāi Tahu leaders at Ōnuku (Akaroa), Ruapuke (in Foveaux Strait), and Ōtakou (Dunedin) in May and June 1840. In June 1840, Major Bunbury, one of the agents collecting signatures, “formally declared British sovereignty over the South Island by cession, four months after the initial signing at Waitangi” (O'Regan 1989, p. 240). By this time, Ngāi Tahu already had significant contact with Europeans which “wrought substantial changes to the Ngāi Tahu economy.” Muskets, whaleboats that replaced double canoes, steel fish-hooks, and the potato were major sources of change; the potato is especially important because it allowed for “more permanent settlements.” Ngāi Tahu also grew potatoes for sealers and whalers, exporting them as far as Australia and using the proceeds to purchase other European goods (p. 238-239). With contact with Europeans also came contact with Christianity, with the new religion becoming well enough established by the time of the land purchases that Ngāi Tahu on these occasions “assembled twice daily under their Christian chiefs for prayers and devotions” (Evison 1988 as quoted in O'Regan 1989, p. 239).

The new religion was incorporated into rather than replaced existing Ngāi Tahu cosmology, however (Cadigan 2001). Roberts et al (1995, p. 8) emphasize the importance of this cosmology, “an indigenous body of knowledge which seeks to explain the origin of the universe,” in understanding Māori views of the non-human world. Central to this cosmology is the concept of whakapapa (genealogy). Whakapapa links everything in the universe, animate and inanimate, physical or spiritual. For Ngāi Tahu, one of the main such links between “the world of the gods and present generations” is the whakapapa of the mountain ancestor Aoraki:

“In the beginning all was darkness (Te Pō). Out of the first glimmer of light (Te Ao), long-standing light (Te Aotūroa) emerged until it stood in all quarters. Encompassing everything was a womb of emptiness, an intangible void (Te Kore). This void was intense in its search for procreation. Finally it reached its ultimate boundaries and became a parentless void (Te Korematua) but with the potential for life. And so Te Mākū, moisture, emerged and coupled with Mahoranuiātea, a cloud that grew from the dawn. From this union came Raki, the heavens, who coupled with Pōhārūa Te Pō, the

breath of life found in the womb of darkness. The first child in this chain of creation was Aoraki who stands as the supreme mountain of Ngāi Tahu” (DoC 2004a, p. 22)¹⁴.

Thus whakapapa ties unite humans with the rest of creation. Aspects of what westerners distinguish as nature are part of what Yoon (1986, p. 31) calls the Māori “environmental family.” Kinship ties with non-human beings are governed by the same reciprocal whauau (family) obligations that structure relationships between humans (Roberts et al 1995, p. 10; see also Cadigan 2001). From this kinship comes the deep ties of people to place. Stories and histories about the land “reinforce tribal identity and continuity between generations, and document the events which shaped the environment of Te Waipounamu and Ngāi Tahu as an iwi” (Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, Schedule 80).

One central story in the Ngāi Tahu geography of stories that links the people with the high mountains of southwest New Zealand is the story of Aoraki and his brothers (Mt Dampier, Mt Teichelmann, and Mt Tasman):

“At this time there was no Te Wai Pounamu or Aotearoa. The waters of Kiwa rolled over the place now occupied by the South Island, the North Island and Stewart Island. No sign of land existed. Raki (the Sky Father) wedded Papa-tūa-nuku (the Earth Mother). After the marriage, some of the Sky Children came down to greet their father’s new wife.

Among the celestial visitors were four sons of Raki who were named Ao-raki (Cloud in the Sky), Raki-ora (Long Raki), Raki-rua (Raki the Second), and Rāraki-roa (Long Unbroken Line). They came down in a canoe which was known as Te Waka O Aoraki. They cruised around Papa-tūa-nuku, who lay as one body in a huge continent known as Hawaiiki. Then, keen to explore, the voyagers set out to sea, but no matter how far they travelled, they could not find land. They decided to return to their celestial home, but the karakia (incantation) which should have lifted the waka (canoe) back to the heavens failed and the canoe fell back into the sea and turned over onto its side, turning to stone and earth in the process. The waka listed and settled with the west side much higher out of the water than the east. Thus the whole waka formed the South Island, hence the name: Te Waka o Aoraki. Aoraki and his brothers clambered on to the high side and were turned to stone. They are still there today.” (DoC 2004a, p. 22).

This and the multitude of similar stories emphasize the rich geography of stories that existed across Te Waipounamu at the time of the European contact, contributing to evolving and overlapping place-meanings and guiding use of the landscape:

“The melt-waters that flow from Aoraki are sacred. On special occasions of cultural moment, the blessings of Aoraki are sought through taking of small amounts of its ‘special’ waters, back to other parts of the island for use in ceremonial occasions.

¹⁴ The versions of Aoraki’s whakapapa and story presented here come from 2004 Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park Management Plan, jointly produced by Ngāi Tahu and DoC. In its preparation, Ngāi Tahu requested these alternate versions be used in preference to those in the Tōpuni Statement (schedule 80) in the 1998 legislation.

To Ngāi Tahu, Aoraki represents the most sacred of ancestors, from whom Ngāi Tahu descend and who provides the iwi with its sense of communal identity, solidarity and purpose. It follows that the ancestor embodied in the mountain remains the physical manifestation of Aoraki, the link between the supernatural and the natural world. The tapu associated with Aoraki is a significant dimension of the tribal value, and is the source of the power over life and death, which the mountain possesses” (Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, Schedule 80)

Crafting an Ethical Methodology: Cross-cultural Academic Storytelling

As a white outsider from another settler nation, narrating Ngāi Tahu stories is fraught with ethical implications, given the history of unequal power relations in academic research. The tradition of history writing from which this thesis emerges has deep roots in a colonizing nineteenth century worldview (Tuhiwai Smith 1999, p. 1-106). Post-colonial scholars have suggested this bias can be corrected by exposing these underlying initial assumptions, by “deconstructing” the colonial structures that shape academic practice (e.g. Said 1978).

While agreeing about the importance of exposing how academic stories are influenced by their storytellers’ position in society, Linda Tuhiwai Smith and other scholars argue these “western critiques of western research” do not go far enough in addressing the power differential between western researcher and indigenous subject (Tuhiwai Smith 1999, p. 163-182). Some believe that the ongoing legacy of unequal power between researcher/writer and ‘native’ subject is so great that it cannot be corrected. They suggest certain stories can only be told by certain storytellers; some histories should only be written by indigenous scholars or indeed only by members of the group being researched (Cant, Goodall & Inns 2005, p. 115; Mihesuah 1998, p. 27-36). However, even when indigenous researchers are writing about their own people, other aspects of identity such as gender or even their very stance as researcher may complicate definitions of insider/outsider status (Tuhiwai Smith 1999, p. 137-141).

Such questions of who can speak for whom or write whose histories under what circumstances as well as what stories may be shared with whom are contested and complex, as work by both indigenous and non-indigenous researchers considering methodology testifies. In New

Zealand, in particular, scholars have given a great deal of attention to moving beyond a simplistic equation of ethnicity and cultural expertise to develop “culturally safe” methodologies of cross-cultural storytelling (e.g. Moller 2000; Cram 1997; Maclean, Berg & Roche 1997). I have drawn on this body of literature in reflexively considering the ethical and methodological implications of my own research.

Even those – like (most) Ngāi Tahu, who used certain Pākehā scholars’ work to argue their Treaty claim – who would support the involvement of non-Māori academics in researching Māori topics emphasize the need to build close relationships or partnerships and make a long term commitment to the communities involved in the research (Moller 2000; Tuhiwai Smith 1999, p. 172-182; Cram 1997). I have begun to build relationships, but given the shortness of my stay in New Zealand, I have deliberately limited the scope of my thesis in regards Ngāi Tahu topics and ensured I used sources endorsed by Ngāi Tahu.

Wherever possible, I have specifically relied on documents created during the Waitangi Tribunal process or as a result of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 (e.g. Waitangi Tribunal 1991; Waitangi Tribunal 1992; Waitangi Tribunal 1995, p. 362-367). I have similarly consulted rūnanga management plans created to be used as inputs into resource planning (Kāi Tahu ki Otago 2005; Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura et al 2005; Te Taumutu Rūnanga 2003; Goodall 1997; Tau et al 1990). Such official stories represent the product of internal Ngāi Tahu negotiation processes and are explicitly designed to convey to outsiders a single agreed-upon version of what are actually multiple – and occasionally contested – versions of stories. In a sense, their use allows Ngāi Tahu to speak for themselves in this thesis; I have deliberately quoted extensively to augment the effect. I have supplemented official accounts with summaries of those involved in the settlement process (e.g. O’Regan 1989) and conversations, primarily with members of the Taumutu rūnanga on visits organized as part of courses at the University of Canterbury. In selecting appropriate sources as well as for introductions, I have benefited from the guidance of my co-supervisor, Dr. Garth Cant. Recognizing that “Māori” is a post-European category and that Māori identity is often experienced as tribal affiliation (Henare 1988, p. 11-16; Rangihau 1977), I have spoken of Ngāi Tahu when using Ngāi Tahu specific sources and Māori when using more general literature.

I recognize some might object to my use of official stories since their content is influenced by the political negotiations from which they were created. For instance, there is political value to Māori in promoting themselves as the environmentally virtuous Other to mainstream society (Berkes 1999, p. 145-156; White 1994). However, I believe the benefit of allowing me to ethically present stories that are not my own provided by using official stories outweighs this objection, particularly since this thesis argues that *every* story is the result of negotiation within existing power-geometries.

My treatment of Ngāi Tahu understandings has necessarily been brief. However, it is important to recognize that the Ngāi Tahu geography of stories was just as fluid as the Pakeha one that obscured it. As much as possible, I have endeavored to convey a dynamic picture rather than the static timeless view of indigenous history that has been shown to be an element of colonization (Rothman 2003, p. 12-37). Most importantly, I have included these Ngāi Tahu stories to emphasize how place meanings of southwest New Zealand as wilderness or recreational site were constructed by ignoring earlier indigenous place-meanings. Like other postcolonial scholars, I believe that acknowledging the perspectives found in indigenous stories and the ways colonization obscured these perspectives is a powerful – though admittedly only initial – step to addressing previous silences.

In New Zealand, recent years have seen a great deal of research responding to gaps created by these earlier silences. The Waitangi Tribunal claims process has been a major catalyst for shifts in the story and practice of New Zealand history, as my own experience demonstrates. The fact that sufficient official sources to tell these stories were publicly available to me in English illustrates the effect of the Tribunal.

The Waitangi Tribunal: Retelling the Story of New Zealand

The Waitangi Tribunal has been both forum and catalyst for broader recognition of Māori stories in New Zealand. Officially established as a fact-finding commission of inquiry, “the Tribunal does not behave like a court...it has the power to devise its own procedures. Thus it commissions research, hears unsworn testimony, accepts evidence that would not be legally admissible elsewhere

and appoints counsel” (Oliver 1991, p. 15). Physically locating hearings on marae and using marae protocol to hear claimant evidence are two important innovations made by the Tribunal are. Functioning according to Māori cultural norms has allowed Māori stories to be told in Māori spaces in Māori ways (Hayward & Wheen, 2004, p. 41-66; Oliver 1991, p. 13-17).

Reports on specific claims have both resulted in important changes in New Zealand society and institutions and become “a focus and a sounding board for widely held anxieties and hopes” as in the case of te reo (Māori language) (Oliver 1991, 66-73). The example of the Te Reo Māori claim and the subsequent adoption of te reo as an official language illustrates a point made by Buddy Mikaere in 1990: “the history of the treaty so far proves that it can be *anything we agree it is*. But the Treaty cannot make a nation. To do that we need to be children of our country’s past” [emphasis in original] (Mikaere 1990 as quoted in Oliver 1991, p. 5). The impact of the Tribunal has not only been in the recommendations it has made on specific claims, but in the “radical reinterpretation of New Zealand history” that has resulted from its investigations (Sorrenson 1989; also see Hayward & Wheen 2004, p. 41-52).

Today, the partnership between Māori and Crown established by the Treaty of Waitangi is central to the official story of New Zealand history expressed in consciously bicultural projects like the New Zealand Historical Atlas (McKinnon 1997). This new story is vividly illustrated by comparing the online Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand being created by Ministry for Culture & Heritage with its 1966 Encyclopedia of New Zealand counterpart. Produced under the oversight of a Māori committee drawn from different parts of the country as well as a general committee, one explicit objective of Te Ara is to contribute Māori content to the nation’s story. As the project’s website (Ministry for Culture & Heritage 2007) explains, “There are currently few reliable and accessible reference sources on Māoritanga; the Māori history, culture, science and stories contained in Te Ara will be a significant contribution to our understanding of the development of New Zealand.” In 1966, before the reevaluation of New Zealand history that came from and accompanied the Waitangi Tribunal process, Māoritanga was not seen as fundamental to understanding the nation’s development. By 2001, when the Te Ara project started, writing an encyclopedia of New Zealand without including Māori in both the story and the storytelling process was politically unacceptable. A

similar change in the official story of conservation land and underlying processes of storytelling has occurred in the four national parks of Te Wāhipounamu South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area as a result of Wai 27, the Ngāi Tahu claim before the Waitangi Tribunal.

Te Kereeme: The Ngāi Tahu Claim

The Ngāi Tahu claim (Wai 27) was one of the first and largest to be heard under the Treaty's expanded mandate. When the Deed of Settlement was finally negotiated in 1997, it ended the 140 year long struggle known to Ngāi Tahu as "Te Kereeme" begun in 1849 and sustained by successive generations (TRoNT 2007). Though referred to as "the" Ngāi Tahu claim, Wai 27 actually comprised nine discrete claims "each of which on its own might have constituted a respectable challenge to the Tribunal" (O' Regan 1989, p. 234). This uniting of nine major claims resulted from the State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) Act 1986. The combined claim was filed before the SOE Act was set to become law in December 1986, as "the prospective passage of these [Crown] assets into the State-Owned Enterprises was seen by Ngāi Tahu as seriously limiting the Crown's capacity for remedy – especially remedies involving land" (O'Regan 1989, p. 234). The essence of these nine claims was that the Crown had breached its promises under the Treaty of Waitangi, purchasing land without fulfilling the terms of the contractual agreements.

When Ngāi Tahu leaders signed the Treaty in 1840, they expected the agreement with the Crown would not change their rangāiratanga over their South Island lands and resources (Cant 2005, p. 199; Waitangi Tribunal 1991, p. 274-277). It would offer them the rights and responsibilities of British citizens and grant to settlers only such lands as Ngāi Tahu chose to sell to the Crown. Given how they had benefited in the 1830s while maintaining control of their land and mahinga kai (food resources), the chiefs saw no reason to doubt the mutually beneficial nature of the obligations imposed by the Treaty. As Sir Tipene O'Regan explains, "The Treaty brought to us by Bunbury, and probed by our questions, was a win-win document" (O'Regan 2001 as quoted in Cant, Goodall, & Inns 2005, p. 199).

Beginning in 1844, Ngāi Tahu sold a series of eight land blocks to the Crown, expecting in return fair compensation, the reserve of adequate land to support the tribe, and continued access to mahinga kai and sacred places (Hemmingston 2004, p. 44-47; Waitangi Tribunal 1991, pp. 29-173). However, the terms of these contracts were on the whole not honored. Purchase prices were set unfairly low, only a small amount of the promised land was reserved, and Crown agents ignored Ngāi Tahu wishes to retain ownership of specific valuable areas. The three-volume 1991 Waitangi Tribunal report chronicles the effect of these breaches of the Treaty, which Garth Cant (2005 p. 200) succinctly summarizes: “Ngāi Tahu was left with insufficient resources to sustain its traditional lifestyle and an inadequate land base to participate in the new agricultural and pastoral economy. In particular, the agents of the Crown responsible for land purchases failed to protect and reserve food gathering places including rivers, lakes, wetlands and seabeds.”

Though Ngāi Tahu attempted to obtain legal redress of their grievances beginning in 1868, the political climate resulting from the demand of British settlers for land prevented a fair hearing, particularly after the devolution of governance from Britain to New Zealand in 1852 (TRoNT 2007; also see Hemmingsen 2004, p. 47-49; Cant 2005, p. 199). TRoNT (2007) points out that while “Ngāi Tahu did not suffer openly declared raupatu or confiscations, as happened in the north,” the long-term impact on the tribe of these Treaty breaches was disastrous: “the Crown's action in taking land and refusing to meet its contract obligation to allocate one-tenth to the iwi, deprived five generations of the tribe of virtually all the land and resources required to survive at anything other than subsistence level. By the early 1900s, fewer than 2,000 Ngāi Tahu remained alive in their own land.” Loss of access to land and resources made it impossible for Ngāi Tahu to continue their customary relationships with the landscape or to control how land would be used. The people and their stories became separated from their places.

This dispossession was not limited to lands Pakeha considered productive; the creation of protected areas similarly represented alienation of five generations of Ngāi Tahu from ancestral lands. “Some of the most important landscapes in Ngāi Tahu mythology and tradition” including Aoraki and his brother mountains had during the twentieth century been incorporated into national parks (O’Regan 1989, p. 257; also see Waitangi Tribunal p. 51-83, 619-632). The course of the Waitangi

Tribunal investigation into Wai 27 also uncovered a number of ancillary claims¹⁵ related to protected areas where land was taken from Ngāi Tahu to create reserves (Waitangi Tribunal 1995).

Besides taking land to create protected areas and excluding Ngāi Tahu from any economic opportunities created by conservation and tourism in protected areas (O'Regan 1989, p. 257), Pakeha managed land within scientific and positivist frameworks that leave little room for differing Māori perspectives. Such scientific positivism has a long history of silencing indigenous ways of understanding and interacting with the non-human world (Usher 2000; Augustine 1997). Pākehā relationships with nature based on extraction and exploitation on the one hand and pristine preservation of wilderness on the other erased Ngāi Tahu practices based on sustained use under a system of kaitiakitanga (guardianship) (Hemmingsen 2004; Kawharu 2000; Roberts et al 1995). Traditional Māori hunting and fishing practices were outlawed as Pakeha society sought to protect indigenous birds (Galbreath 2002). In some cases Māori were even blamed for low species numbers; stories portraying Māori use of the landscape as destructive often drew on archeological findings about their ancestors who had wantonly killed off all the moa. Living in a world where Pakeha stories shaped dominant views of landscape and Pakeha made environmental management decisions, Māori katiaki were no longer able to fulfill their obligations to care for their lands.

The above story of grievances relies upon and follows the *Ngāi Tahu Report*, released by the Waitangi Tribunal in 1991 (though many citations are also provided to scholars' interpretations of this large three-volume document). Publication of the main report, the fisheries report, and the ancillary claims report in 1991, 1992, and 1995 ended a process of research and hearings begun with the filing of the claims in August 1986 (Cant 2005, p. 200). The 1991 report as well as academic interpretations, summaries, and extensions it inspired represent publication of a vast body of history told from the Ngāi Tahu perspective which up until that time was not available in writing or in English. However, the context for telling these stories was not historic revision, but rather part of a judicial fact finding process. The 1991 Report presented the Tribunal's findings on each of the claims, providing a starting point for Ngāi Tahu and the Crown to negotiate a settlement. A long negotiation process (TRoNT

¹⁵ Ancillary claims are additional grievances or Treaty breaches brought to light by the research and hearing process itself (Oliver 1991, p. 15).

2007, “The Negotiators”) resulted in an agreement being reached in 1997, with the agreed-upon terms being legislated by the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998.

The settlement resulted not only in material and policy changes in the relationship between Crown and Ngāi Tahu, but also represented recognition by the dominant society and institutions of Ngāi Tahu stories and place meanings (TRoNT 2007, “The Settlement Offer”). The Ngāi Tahu settlement negotiation team illustrated the settlement using a jigsaw graphic (reproduced in Figure 6.2) in the special edition of the iwi magazine *Te Karaka* produced to explain the settlement to iwi members. The centre is the formal Crown apology acknowledging “that Ngāi Tahu has suffered grave injustices which significantly impaired its economic, social and cultural development” (Ngāi Tahu Negotiation Group 1997, p. 14). The pinnacle is Aoraki and recognition of Ngāi Tahu’s mana. The base is economic redress, including NZ\$170 million and property. Cultural redress and recognition of Ngāi Tahu’s kaitiaki role in resource management are similarly emphasized. Changing policies and stories in conservation and protected lands therefore specifically serves as part of the redress of grievances.

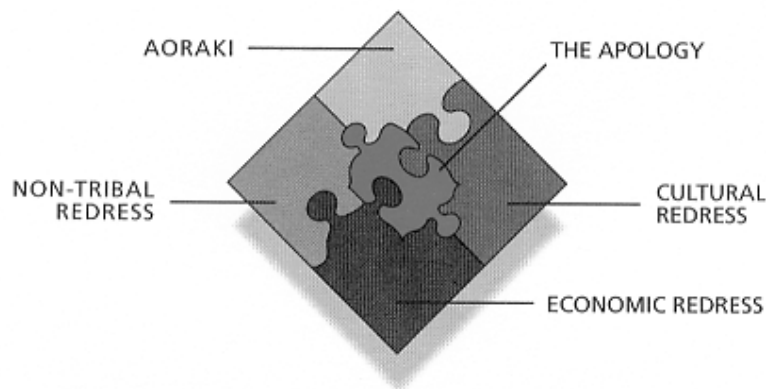


Figure 6.2: The Settlement Jigsaw

First, the settlement officially recognizes Ngāi Tahu’s long connection with the landscape and the sacred status of certain areas – the Tōpuni (Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act, Schedule 80). In particular, the settlement provided for the recognition of the spiritual significance of Aoraki by mandating the renaming of Mt Cook to Aoraki/Mt Cook and the return of the mountain to the tribe.

As agreed upon, this highly symbolic transaction (which has not occurred to date due to political considerations internal to Ngāi Tahu) begins with the Crown formally returning title of Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park to Ngāi Tahu. The return is to be made in the understanding that the iwi will within a week then formally re-gift it to the Crown for continuing use as a national park by the people of New Zealand (TRoNT 2007, “Aoraki”). Thus the purely Pākehā story of the meaning of Mt Cook National Park is augmented by a story which restores Ngāi Tahu’s mana by allowing them to gift the mountain (in the manner of Tongariro) rather than it being taken for use as a national park. This new story was physically written onto the landscape, with signs across the South Island having text replaced to read Aoraki/Mount Cook; I was intrigued to notice in my explorations that sometimes the new name had to be added in a smaller font in order to fit the existing space.

The changed relationship between Crown and Ngāi Tahu is also reflected in the changing context for making decisions about land use. The settlement formally mandated Ngāi Tahu involvement in interpretation and certain other management aspects of national parks within their rohe, as well as specifying their role in managing conservation areas such as Waihora/Lake Ellesmere and Waiwera/Lake Forsyth (Rachel Puentener, pers comm. 16/1/07; also see Ngāi Tahu Settlement Claims Act 1998). The provisions of the settlement fit within a wider context of viewing resource management in New Zealand as a partnership between the Department of Conservation and tangata whenua. The inclusion of a Treaty clause in the 1986 Environment Act, 1987 Conservation Act, and the 1991 Resource Management Act and the inclusion of principles of kaitiakitanga testifies to this wider context of decolonizing resource management in New Zealand. The shift from previous views is evident in the testimonial of Ken Piddington, Director-General of Conservation, during the Ngāi Tahu ancillary claim hearings. Piddington’s submittal that “there is no incompatibility between the department’s responsibility to manage land and waters for conservation purposes and the vesting of such areas in Māori ownership” was cited by the Tribunal as “a substantial move forward from the traditional viewpoint, whereby Crown ownership of resources is considered to be essential.” This general principle that “the management of land is not dependent on ownership” is evident in the new shared role for Ngāi Tahu in resource management mandated in the 1998 settlement legislation (Waitangi Tribunal 1995, p. 362-367). This new partnership role for the iwi represents a legislated

change in power-geometries between storytellers to shape place-meanings and policy decisions in national park lands, especially in the designated Tōpuni area in Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park.

A Long and Winding Road: Decolonizing Place-Meanings in Southwest New Zealand

The Waitangi Tribunal process and the Ngāi Tahu settlement have reshaped both official stories and storytelling processes influencing place-meanings in southwest New Zealand. Recognition of Ngāi Tahu values has joined older stories of national parks as pristine nature in official understandings of conservation (e.g. DoC 2004a). However, translating these legislated changes in stories into new place-meanings within the wider society is a slow and uneven process.

Examples of real changes and growing partnerships are present. Each DoC conservancy employs a Pou Kura Taiao (Indigenous Conservation Ethics Manager), responsible for liaising between the conservancy and the iwi holding manawhenua status. DoC also actively recruits members of Ngāi Tahu whanui for other conservation roles. (DoC 2007 “Kāhui Kura Taiao”; also see Ogonowska-Coates 2007). Within the Ngāi Tahu rohe, since 2000 the Pou Kura Taiao as well as rūnanga representatives have met regularly with relevant conservancy staff (Rachel Puentener, pers comm., 16/1/07). These meetings allow tangata whenua input into projects in the formative stages rather than just bringing them in to rubber-stamp DoC decisions. For instance, the content of the Routeburn Road End interpretation panels in Mt Aspiring National Park was developed through three feedback cycles between this group and the project managers (Mat Ellison, pers comm., 28/1/07). University scientists and Raikura Māori have formed a long-term research partnership investigating the sustainability of the tītī (muttonbird) harvest on the southern tītī islands. Control of the research rests with the rūnanga rather than the scientists (Moller 2000). Ngāi Tahu and Outward Bound have co-created Aoraki Bound, a course bringing brings cultural knowledge into a traditional Outward Bound curriculum, creating leadership training opportunities for young Ngāi Tahu that provide exposure to their history as well as recreational challenges (Tumataroa 2006).

Ngāi Tahu stories have also been given a formal place in policy-making. Consideration of Māori place-meanings and opinions about land use policies are legislated as part of the consent granting process under the RMA and many iwi and sub-groups have created their own management plans (e.g. Kāi Tahu ki Otago 2005; Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura et al 2005; Te Taumutu Rūnanga 2003; Goodall 1997; Tau et al 1990). With a format that reflects Ngāi Tahu views of the environment rather than a traditional government report structure, these documents represent a written Ngāi Tahu perspective input into the resource planning process, and their creation has often been an affirming process for those creating them (Smith 2007). However, the role of Māori involvement in environmental management remains contested, tied up as it is with larger issues of identity (Hemmingsen 2004).

Despite these real changes, therefore, very often new official stories are only rhetoric. When the Ngāi Tahu settlement was being negotiated, environmental and recreational groups strongly lobbied against the use of conservation lands to settle the claim. Ben White's (1994, p. 3) analysis of discourse produced during this controversy found that conservation groups were "concerned primarily with defending their rights to recreate on lands owned and managed by the Crown." In 2007, thirteen years later, a Federated Mountain Clubs Bulletin demonstrated the same defensiveness about the need for "an underlying policy that recognises and protects the rights of locals" to freely access conservation lands. Spearpoint (2007, "Just a visitor, or do you live here?") argues that "DoC needs to recognize New Zealanders' special relationship with their land" in an article that doesn't mention Māori at all. Compensation paid to Ngāi Tahu as a result of the settlement and the resulting change in resource distributions continue to inspire angry letters to the editor, particularly as the iwi has become one of the major economic players on the South Island. Mandated co-management processes and Māori consultation under the RMA often ends up being experienced by those being consulted as simply a rubber stamp formality. Another difficulty is the time and labor burdens imposed on iwi by co-management and consultation. Ngāi Tahu rūnanga, for example, are led by volunteers, who often do without pay the preparation of submissions for which government staff or corporate employees are fully compensated in their official capacities (Smith 2007). In recognition of the work required to provide input, DoC conservancies wanting substantial help from rūnanga developing interpretation

materials are expected to negotiate appropriate compensation in a formal contract (TRoNT 2006).

The result of this slow and uneven change is a patchwork of evolving place-meanings. Even within interpretation materials at visitor centres managed by DoC, a Crown agency legislated to tell the Ngāi Tahu story as part of their wider role in protecting and promoting New Zealand's heritage in Te Wāhipounamu World Heritage Area, older representations of landscape simultaneously exist with new. The next chapter uses my own encounters with on-the-ground differences between locations to explore how storytelling is place-specific.

Chapter Seven

A Geography of Storytelling in Southwest New Zealand

The last three chapters collectively traced the historic origins of the geography of stories that underlies evolving place-meanings in southwest New Zealand. These chapters aggregated representations produced by diverse individuals in a variety of times and places to explore how stories about land have changed over time. In this chapter, I disaggregate these stories, turning my analysis to the on-the-ground sites where representations are viewed, produced, re-presented, and ultimately negotiated. I explore the geography of storytelling which is now producing Te Wāhipounamu's geography of stories.

I use interpretive materials as a lens to explore how and where the dominant narrative strands in my geography of stories – world heritage, national parks, and Ngāi Tahu cultural significance - are reflected. I focus specifically on the examples of DoC's visitor centres in Aoraki/Mt Cook and South Westland, though briefly discuss interpretation by private concessionaires and in other conservancies. I use textual analysis and my experiences moving within Te Wāhipounamu South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area to demonstrate how place-meanings of the study area as a whole are expressed differently in specific locations. I supplement my participant-observation with oral histories and analysis of documents related to the production of interpretation materials. I answer two related questions: How does the story of conserving pristine nature and its relationship to human history vary within the world heritage area? How can differences in the process of creating interpretation stories explain these variations?

Interpretation Materials: A Window into Storytelling Negotiations

Interpretation is a specific form of storytelling which “reveals new insight into what makes a place special” (Carter 2001 as quoted in Colquhoun 2005, p. viii). By explaining “the natural, cultural

or historic values attached to places,” interpretation “enables visitors to gain insight and understanding about the reasons for conservation and ongoing protection of our heritage” (Colquhoun 2005, p. viii).

A variety of storytelling activities which conveyed information to tourists and could be termed interpretation began in New Zealand in the nineteenth century (e.g. Māori guides at Whakarewarewa near Rotorua). The theories and practices of interpretation as understood by DoC and many commercial operators today, however, are specifically rooted in the post-war interpretation model of the U.S. National Park Service. DLS was significantly influenced in the 1970s and 1980s by the practices in U.S. parks, as demonstrated in the creation of interpretive visitor centres for most protected areas. New Zealand interpretation was also shaped by the theory which underlay US practice, which was taught as part of the ranger training curriculum at Lincoln College (Colquhoun 2005, p. x). Emerging from a growing sense of American national parks as places to educate environmental citizens, Freeman Tilden’s (1957) *Interpreting Our Heritage* is the classic expression of interpretation theory and continues to influence interpretation in both nations today (Colquhoun 2005, p. 3; NPS 2007 “What is interpretation?”).

While classifying interpretation as an “educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships,” Tilden emphasizes that it is a particular kind of active learning which visitors choose to participate in during their leisure time. More than “simply” the communication of “factual information,” interpretation uses “original objects...first hand experience, and...illustrative media” to “capitalize mere curiosity for the enrichment of the human mind and spirit” (Tilden 1977 p. 8, as quoted Colquhoun 2005, p. viii).

Interpretation materials therefore are explicitly designed to convey the significance of a place to visitors who often do not have previous understanding of what makes that place distinct. As representations produced for audiences who require help “to appreciate why the place is culturally significant,” interpretation materials require their storytellers to first “understand[] and define[] significance (the ‘aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations’)” (Long & Sweet 2006, p. 451-452). Interpretation materials consciously express storytellers’ understandings that are often only implicitly present in other representations of land. The

fact that they thus allow direct analysis of how their creators understand place-meanings and how the final product was shaped by negotiations between storytellers is one reason I have chosen them as a lens.

There is a second reason I have chosen to analyze variations in interpretation materials – and focus particularly on DoC – in order to illustrate the evolving, contested, and location-dependent nature of place-meanings in southwest New Zealand. In the course of researching this thesis, my encounters with and responses to various interpretation materials have been fundamental in shaping my own understanding of this area and particularly uneven emphasis on its world heritage status (Chapter 3). My own experience of interpretation materials as a source of conceptions would hold true for many other visitors to conservation areas, domestic and international alike. In many areas like Haast Pass Highway, with pull-outs of interest every few kilometres, DoC interpretation materials are the most prominent; even when tourists pay for private experiences like nature walks at Mt Cook they are also likely to tour DoC's visitor centre. Indeed, some commercial excursions explicitly incorporate DoC materials into their product; for instance, guided sea kayaking trips in Doubtful Sound schedule time after the boat ride across Lake Manapouri and encourage clients to read the DoC interpretation at West Arm. Thus interpretive stories told in visitor centres, signs, and DoC pamphlets not only reflect but also have real power to constitute place meanings.

Using interpretive materials to study place-meanings has two possible disadvantages, however. First, the story as understood by visitors is not necessarily the one storytellers set out to tell. The understanding produced by interpretation stories, like any knowledge, depends on the experiences and perspectives of the visitor who reads or listens. However, analysis of how visitors understand interpretation materials is a different question beyond the scope of this thesis. In this chapter my concern is to use interpretation materials as reflections of the understanding of places held by those who create them. Second, interpretation materials are shaped by their intended audience. To successfully convey the meaning of places to visitors who often have little previous knowledge, interpretation materials must tell easy to understand stories (Colquhoun 2005, p. 1-10). As a result, they may obscure contested meanings and present a sanitized version of the significance of places, as Long & Sweet (2006) demonstrated for world heritage in Laos (Chapter 4). However, the way

interpretation materials aggregate contested meanings makes them even more useful for my purposes in this chapter of reconstructing negotiations between storytellers. I analyze what is left out and what is common between the stories told in various locations within Te Wāhipounamu. By then relating these stories and silences to the processes that produced interpretation materials, I have been able to suggest the geography of storytelling that produced the geography of stories in southwest New Zealand.

Site-specific Storytelling: Devolved Production of Interpretation Materials

DoC uses a variety of means to communicate the significance of protected areas to visitors. Headquarters as well as individual conservancies produce a range of pamphlets, fact-sheets, and brochures. Roving interpreters give talks in certain locations, generally during the busier summer season. On-site interpretation panels are scattered throughout the conservation estate. As of 2005, the agency operated over 25 visitor and information centres (Colquhoun 2005, p. x), though these centres serve multiple functions in addition to interpretation (Figure 5). As a result, the emphasis given to interpretive stories is much greater in park visitor centres like the Westland National Park Visitor Centre in Franz Josef than in the centres in Queenstown or Wellington, who focus on marketing. The specific amount and methods of interpretation in any given location varies based not only on the conservation values of the area, intended audience, and budget (Colquhoun 2005, p. 11-46) but also is significantly influenced by the background and preferences of those creating the materials.

The perspectives of storytellers significantly influence the way stories are told since responsibility for interpretation, like other DoC functions, is decentralized. Staff within the Head Office in Wellington develop standards and guidelines for interpretation (e.g. DoC 2006a; Colquhoun 2005). Specific interpretation projects happen at the conservancy or area office level, ultimately overseen by the Conservator or Area Manager. Though their jobs officially focus on other areas, rangers and other field staff also play important roles in interpreting places to visitors. From volunteer

hut wardens to visitor centre staff to track maintenance crews, the employees on the ground retain close connections to the places where they work and serve as the human face of DoC for many visitors (Joan McCallum, pers comm., 22/6/07). As is typical within DoC's devolved structure, the actual processes for initiating and implementing projects are influenced as much by personal relationships between staff as formal processes (Rachael Egerton, pers comm., 22/6/07).

Storytellers outside of DoC also play particular roles in the creation of interpretation materials. Consistent with wider patterns in post-structural adjustment government in New Zealand, private interpretation contractors do much of the actual work of drafting text or manufacturing signs. Since the settlement was negotiated in 1997, Ngāi Tahu – at the corporate Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (TRoNT) level as well as each rūnanga within its area – have played a legislated role in overseeing interpretation of the cultural significance of conservation lands within their rohe (Chapter 6). On occasion, volunteers or local organisations partner with DoC on specific interpretation projects. For instance, DoC and the Wellington Regional Council cooperated to create interpretation along the Rimutaka Rail Trail in the Hutt Valley, using the same author to tell an integrated story in story panels along a track that crosses both DoC and council land (Alderson 2007). Another example is *Stepping into Fiordland National Park* (2006), the film shown in the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre in Te Anau. Filmmaker Corrie Francis directed the film on a volunteer basis during her time as a Fulbright Fellow, donating her specialized knowledge to help staff to tell the Fiordland story in a visually appealing way (Corrie Francis, pers comm., 18/4/07). In addition to volunteers, for-profit concessionaires are recognized as interpretation partners. Today commercial operators do much of the live interpretation and guiding that was once done by rangers. While most national parks and many forest parks ran interpretive summer activity programmes in the 1980s, these are limited today. Full summer programmes ran only in Fiordland and Tongariro National Parks in the summer of 2007-8, reflecting the disappearance of central funding and the need to pay for such programmes out of conservancy budgets (Kay Booth, pers comm., 25/6/07).

How responsibility for interpretation is divided within conservancies is not standardized either. Area managers, area office rangers, conservancy level Technical Support Officers (TSO), and the conservancy Pou Kura Taio (in English, Indigenous Conservation Ethics Manager) play varying

roles depending on which conservancy one considers. The variability in position titles and how they correspond to responsibility for interpretation was made clear to me in my own efforts to figure out who was the appropriate person to contact in each conservancy. Calling one conservancy office and asking for someone with the same title who had been helpful in another conservancy in some cases resulted in me speaking with someone whose job had little to do with interpretation.

Variations in the division of responsibility for interpretation reflect wider variations in priorities and structure between conservancies. Throughout DoC, resources are scarce relative to the work to be done, though DLS's historic funding structure based on visitor numbers seems to have lingering effects on greater capacity in iconic areas such as Fiordland and Tongariro (Kay Booth, pers comm., 25/6/07). The Wanaka visitor centre's inability to show videos to visitors provides a poignant example of these trade-offs; lack of staff housing resulted in the audiovisual room being converted (Mat Ellison, pers comm., 28/1/08). Within this environment, the emphasis given to interpretation differs depending on the priorities of the conservator and the training and interests of other staff. Partnerships with concessionaires play greater or lesser roles depending on the existing commercial operators and their expertise (Rachael Egerton, pers comm., 22/6/07). DoC does not have agency-wide definitions of what makes interpretation successful; strategic planning happens at the conservancy or even area office level.

Some general trends in the focus and methods of interpretation, however, are apparent throughout New Zealand. Interpretive storytelling was given high priority under DLS. Interpretation in national parks told historic stories that mirrored the celebratory histories of parks examined in Chapter 5 but which recognized human interaction with park landscapes over time as a means of portraying national parks as places to be used and enjoyed by people (Murray Reedy, pers comm., 29/11/07; also see DLS 1984, p. 183-189).

A number of those I spoke with perceived a backsliding in the quality of interpretation since the 1980s. Certainly, summer programmes and DLS-produced guidebooks are no longer the norm; their elimination seems primarily the result of a philosophical "user-pays" shift to relying on the market to produce guidebooks and guided excursions. Such reliance on the market is not without its critics, since providing interpretation through the markets limits access to it to those who pay.

Additional issues include uneven message quality and questions of whether DoC still needs to interpret landscapes where an educational experience is offered by a for-profit company, such as the Hukawai Glacier Centre in Franz Josef (William Bevil, pers comm., 22/6/07).

Similarly, while guiding concessionaires are required to consult with Ngāi Tahu if they choose to use iwi stories in their interpretation, they unlike DoC are not mandated to include these perspectives except in specific Tōpuni areas (TRoNT 2005). As a result, the extent to which private businesses interpret Ngāi Tahu values is variable and depends significantly on individual companies and/or even individual guides within the same business, who often have significant autonomy in storytelling. On a kayaking trip with my family in Fiordland, for instance, our guide shared Ngāti Mamoe stories he had learned from a personal friend with Ngāti Mamoe whakapapa; these stories varied in certain ways from the official Ngāi Tahu perspectives I found in official documents (Chapter 6). However, we would have heard different stories – or potentially no Ngāi Tahu stories at all – had we been with another guide or company.

A second explanation for recent lesser emphasis within DoC on interpretation was the 1995 Cave Creek disaster. Following a tragic accident where 14 people died when a viewing platform collapsed, DoC – like other New Zealand government agencies – focused much attention on ensuring the safety of its physical infrastructure. Interpretation was placed under the same Visitor Asset Management division as maintaining physical infrastructure like viewing platforms, leading to it being overshadowed by safety concerns as well as resulting in the hiring of individuals primarily for technical expertise rather than storytelling ability. Cave Creek also seems to have facilitated the shift towards relying on concessionaires to provide guided experiences, since liability concerns made some conservancies leery about running old-style summer programme tramps and excursions (Kay Booth, pers comm., 25/6/07).

In the past few years, however, the pendulum has swung back towards prioritizing interpretation and the role of storytelling in achieving behaviour change and/or support for conservation. One reason is that DoC now has proven policies in place to ensure physical visitor safety and can turn its energy back to telling stories about the significance of places. At the same time, interpretation practices continue to evolve in response to changes in the wider world. The internet has

become more important as a means of transmitting information (Rachael Egerton, pers comm., 22/6/07) and an increasingly visual culture means more emphasis on images over text (Joan McCallum, pers comm., 22/6/07). Another recent influence has been the work of Sam Ham, who brings principles from marketing communications to the delivery of interpretation (Joan McCallum, pers comm., 22/6/07; see also Colquhoun 2005, p. 3).

Growing emphasis on conveying the cultural and historic aspects of the heritage DoC manages has accompanied the wider shift away from stories of pristine nature. This new appreciation for conserving and interpreting New Zealand's history is partly the result of the wider reinterpretation of New Zealand history coming out of the Waitangi Tribunal process and the creative energy of bicultural public history projects such as Te Ara and the *New Zealand Historical Atlas* (Chapter 6). Until quite recently, however, the impact on DoC was minimal, with DLS's focus on natural values proving a continuing legacy influencing conceptions of interpretation. In 2000, American Janelle Warren-Findley, a public historian working within the Ministry of Culture on an Ian Axford policy fellowship, wrote a report (Warren-Findley 2000) critiquing the gap between interpretive storytelling and the nuanced integration of nature and culture found in other public history projects. In 2003, Tourism New Zealand commissioned social research Colmar Brunton to produce a report on the Demand for Cultural Tourism (Colmar Brunton 2003); this study similarly found a lack of emphasis on communicating cultural values.

While not everyone agreed with all the conclusions in these two reports, they brought increased attention to historic heritage and have influenced Head Office efforts to promote the telling of nuanced stories about the interaction between humans and the environment in ways that convey their broader historical contexts (Paul Mahoney, pers comm., 22/6/07). For example, an updated version of the interpretation standard handbook (Colquhoun 2005) and a resource handbook for concessionaires (DoC 2006a) stress the importance of human history of natural areas to overall interpretation efforts. In 2007, Head Office ran a series of historic heritage trainings for conservancy staff that emphasized a cultural landscapes approach and how wider historic conservation efforts depend on telling stories that situate sites within larger historical contexts (Alderson 2007). While in

conversations Head Office staff are optimistic about the shift in DoC climate, they also remain conscious that their role is limited by DoC's devolved structure.

Besides all these variations in conservancy processes that influence how new stories are produced, time is an additional element explaining the interpretation materials that exist in any given location. New interpretation projects have to compete for funding within tight budgets. They may not happen as often or as quickly as staff would like, sometimes resulting in considerable lag time before materials on the ground reflect evolving place-meanings held by current storytellers. At the same, the storytelling process is continually evolving in individual conservancies. For example, Otago is potentially considering returning to conservancy-wide coordination of interpretation projects as a way to resolve issues encountered in the recent Routeburn Road-End project in Mt Aspiring. Devolution of control of projects to the area offices some five years ago was itself a response to challenges with earlier projects, when area office staff felt storytelling decisions were being made too far away from those who best understood a site's significance (Mat Ellison, pers comm., 28/1/08).

Interpretation in Te Wāhipounamu, then, represents a patchwork of interpretation stories produced by four different conservancy's processes and updated at different speeds, supplemented by variable commercial efforts. Les Molloy (pers comm, 14/11/07) points out that the current interpretive materials emerged from "organic" layered storytelling processes. Thus the geographies of stories that form place-meanings are themselves the result of geographies of negotiation between human storytellers. Much variation between stories in individual pieces of interpretation can be explained by knowing who created it, in what time period, the constraints within which they were working, and how they understood the place whose significance they were conveying.

Interpretation Sits in Places: Te Wāhipounamu's Meaning from Specific Locations

Place meanings, like science and other forms of knowledge, are produced in places (Massey 2003, p. 74-77). Looking at interpretation materials and relating them to the

geography of storytelling that created them puts the production of place meanings “in their place” (Livingstone 2003). My own understanding of Te Wāhipounamu was shaped in specific locations: looking at signs, standing in visitor centres, pulling off road overlooks to read panels, listening to a commercial sea kayak guide. As I moved through the landscape encountering specific representations of Te Wāhipounamu in specific locations, I gleaned different – and occasionally conflicting – stories.

A Tale of Two Visitor Centres

21 March 2007. I arrive in Haast in a rainstorm. My backpackers’ is one of the few buildings among other hotels, a couple of cafes and the DoC visitor centre in an otherwise remote area. As I was warned, there is not even a cashpoint between the glaciers and Wanaka. Like me, the others travelers at the backpackers are on their way between Wanaka and the West Coast, mostly stopping for a single night, though some are staying two to take a day trip to Jackson Bay.

22 March 2007. Morning sun glares off the modern aluminum building of the Haast Visitor Centre (Image 1), landscaped to blend into the wetland around it (Image 2). A plaque out front (Image 3) clearly explains that I am in the South-West New Zealand World Heritage, “a priceless remnant of the flora and fauna that once inhabited the ancient super-continent of Gondwanaland” “recognised as one of the world’s outstanding natural heritage sites” by UNSECO on 12 December 1990.

Inside, carefully framed picture windows give the impression of being part of the landscape myself (Image 4). Displays link the story of South Westland to the story of the world heritage area. A globe of world heritage sites around the world is next to information about “What is world heritage all about?” A map display (Image 5) shows the various conservation areas that together comprise Te Wāhipounamu; this is the first map of the entire world heritage area I’ve seen, even though I’ve been driving through it for two days. I learn that “South Westland is the area of South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area where wilderness coast, rainforest, and mountains remain together in a pristine condition.” Nearby I read about the “wet” coast’s tough settlers and that South Westland is “to a large extent still a wild and challenging place.” Here, people live on the edge “between forests, mountains and sea as they have done since the very earliest days of occupation” and the future of the area “lies in its greatest resource, its unspoiled scenery and unique natural systems.”

While nature from mountains to sea is a significant focus of the display panels, a history of human interaction with nature is also a theme. I learn about Māori and explorers who earlier encountered this wilderness. On one side of the room, nineteenth century photographs depict surveying parties who could “be said” to be “the earliest European mountaineering parties as well”; on the other a tukutuku panel “uses a combination of traditional patterns to illustrate some of the Māori history of South

Westland.” In some displays, Māori are relegated to history with past-tense descriptions of woodworking and stone working while other text emphasizes continuing relationships with landscape, for instance informing me that Mount Aspiring “is known to Māori as Titea” [my emphasis]. Human stories are not limited to past occupants or indigenous people; I also read about current conservation efforts to restore kaka, the local whitebait industry, and ongoing research on the Haast River. A display section on penguins (Image 6) integrates scientific information with how Māori saw and used these birds as well as how I can help this “protected treasure” species. Other displays containing stuffed ducks, though, make neither mention of Māori nor any attempt to draw me into the story. Like on the penguin display, te reo is used throughout most but not all of the displays; one sign specifically introduces Māori names and translations for various places within Te Wāhipounamu. The same large panel I saw in Franz Josef (Image 7) introduces Ngāi Tahu as “a significant partner in conservation management in New Zealand” whose “Takiwa (ancestral land) covers most of the South Island” and summarizes the five components of the settlement.

A panel on Wilderness Highways (Image 8), subtitled “the modern explorer,” provides information about attractions on Haast Pass Highway, inviting me to follow in the footsteps of the many others who have explored this wilderness before me. Buying a brochure about Haast Pass Highway points of interest from the ranger, I leave Haast before noon on my way to Wanaka. On my way out, I hear an English woman exclaiming that it all is “brilliant...[she] could spend ages here.”

Two days later. 24 March 2007. The Aoraki/Mount Cook visitor centre is a vaguely alpine looking wooden building (Image 9) dwarfed by both the surrounding high peaks and the modern Hermitage behind it (Image 10). The sign out front welcomes me to the visitor centre, a part of the Te Wāhipounamu South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area; a plaque similar to that at Haast is mounted nearby. Inside, however, there is minimal information about either the world heritage area or Aoraki; the story is primarily that of Mount Cook National Park.

The visitor centre consists of three rooms, but the total space feels cramped compared to Haast or Franz Josef. One is devoted to logistical information, with the information desk, maps of walks in the park, and racks of pamphlets describing tracks and how to safely equip oneself for a tramping trip. A prominent goal seems to be dissuading inexperienced parties from attempting too much within the park, warning visitors away from areas where “all travel requires mountaineering skill and equipment.” There is also information about current DoC projects such as pest control, fire prevention, and wetland protection, mostly in the form of general posters similar to those I have seen in other DoC spaces such as the Hokitika office of the West Coast conservancy.

To my right is primarily retail space, with clothing, postcards, souvenirs, and a few books for sale. Titles include mountaineering adventure memoirs and general works on Māori. The lack of titles on the human history of the area is a surprise to me, accustomed as I am to U.S. National Park Service bookshops which are one of the best places to acquire history books about parks. A video (*He Atua, He Tipuna* 2003) about Ngāi Tahu perspectives on mountains is also available for purchase. At the far end of this room is a three-dimensional model of the park topography which lights up to identify specific features. Behind it a memorial book commemorates those who have died in the park. Interpretation and souvenirs literally overlap each other in this room; a mahinga kai poster is underneath a shelf of mugs and T-shirts and a poster about Matariki (the Māori New Year) is on the wall behind a revolving rack of key rings.

Image 1: Haast Visitor Centre exterior (top)¹⁶

Image 2: Haast Visitor Centre landscaping (left)

Image 3: World Heritage plaque outside Haast Visitor Centre (right)



¹⁶ All photographs are by the author.

Image 4: Picture Window at Haast (top)

Image 5: Te Wāhipounamu Map at Haast (bottom)

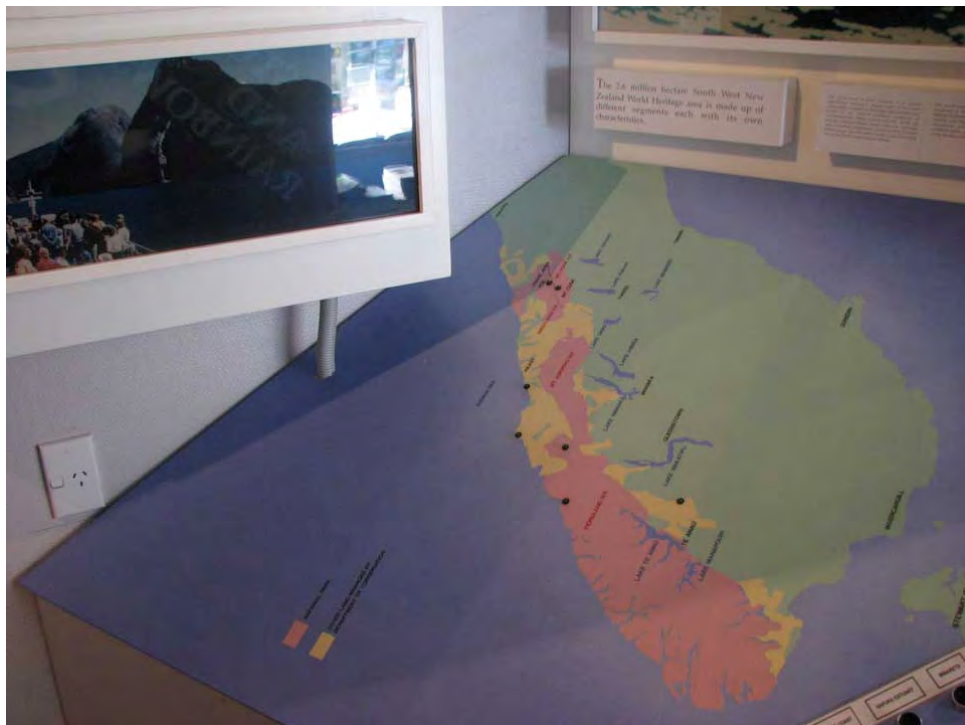


Image 6: Settlement Panel at Haast (left)

Image 7: Penguin Panel at Haast (right)

Image 8: Wilderness Highways display at Haast (bottom)



Image 9: Aoraki/Mount Cook Visitor Centre (top)
Image 10: Hermitage (bottom)



Image 11: Insects display at Aoraki/Mount Cook (left)

Image 12: Stuffed weasel eating rabbit at Aoraki/Mount Cook (top right)

Image 13: Predator captions at Aoraki/Mount Cook (middle right)

Image 14: Malte Brun hut replica at Aoraki/Mount Cook (bottom)

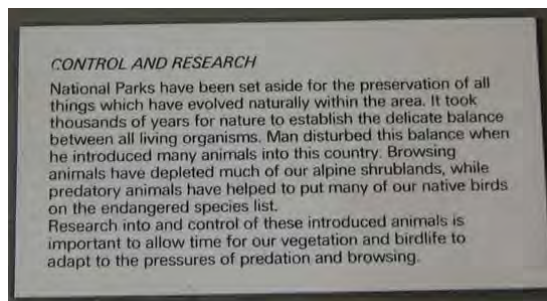


Image 15: Hut display in front of Wilderness display at Aoraki/Mount Cook (left)

Image 16: Wilderness quote at Aoraki/Mount Cook (right)

Image 17: Detail of Settlement Panel (bottom)

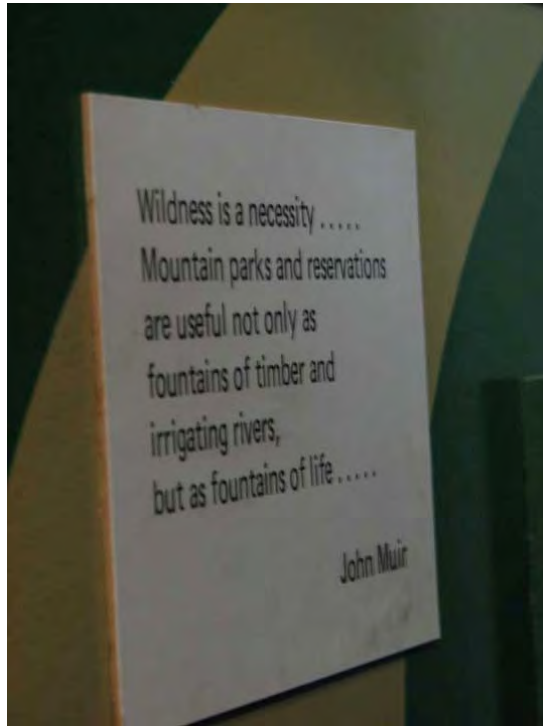


Image 18: Bilingual ice panel at Aoraki/Mount Cook (top)

Image 19: Tapu mountain sign at Aoraki/Mount Cook (left)

Image 20: Ngāi Tahu floor panel (right)

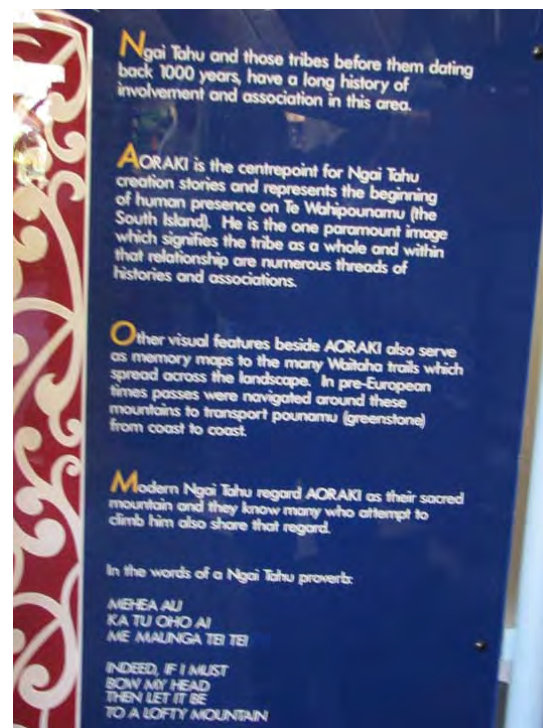
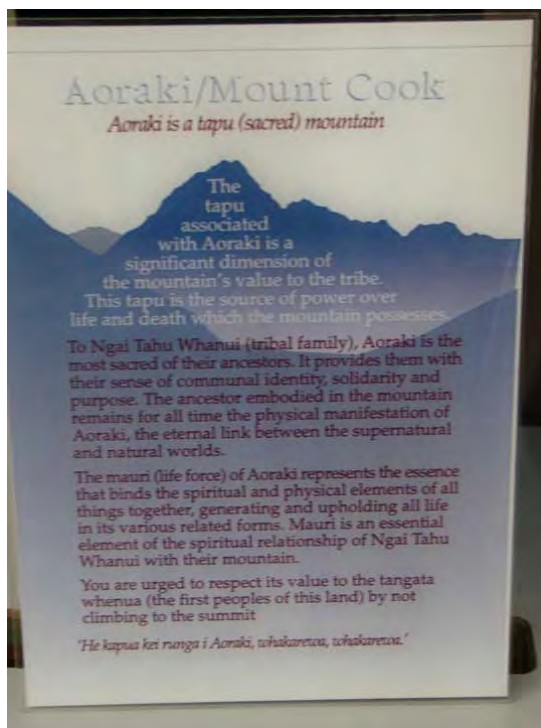
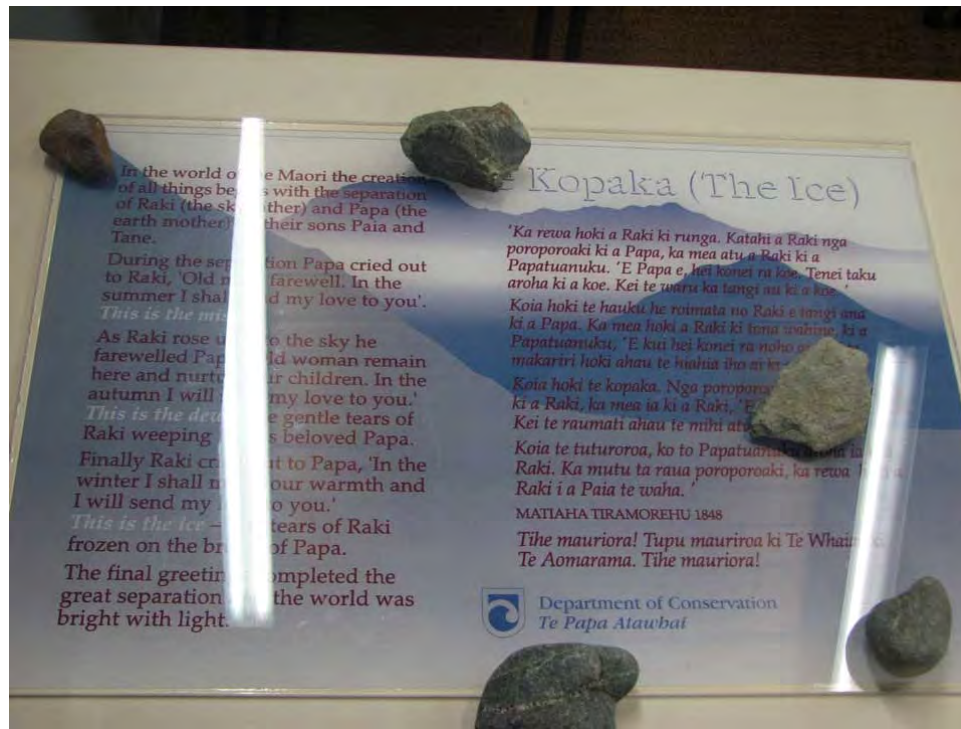


Image 21: Waka stone at Aoraki/Mount Cook (top)
 Image 22: Ship Creek on-site interpretation (bottom)



The third room is the site of most of the interpretation materials. Although it appears to have once been a video screening room, there is no indication any audio-visual presentation is available today. Displays in glass cases (Image 11) interpret natural history topics like insects, geology, birds, and predators. A stuffed falcon is labeled as “acceptable” because it is native. Other predators which “have helped to put many of our native birds on the endangered species list” such as the preserved weasel (Image 12) mounted with barred teeth eating a rabbit obviously have no place in the park. The caption (Image 13) explains how “national parks have been set aside for the preservation of all things which have evolved naturally in the area.”

The human story in this room is mainly one of Europeans encountering wilderness and gradually learning to appreciate it. Early explorers give way to early mountaineers, many of them international parties. In the 1960s, I learn, “once again it was the influences of overseas climbers that stirred the locals to greater things.” Other verb choices celebrate the progressive conquest of nature: “the last unclimbed ridge on Mount Cook, the South Ridge, *fell* to the team...” [my emphasis]. A replica of the Malte Brun hut (Image 14) allows me to literally step inside and share the experience of earlier alpine recreationalists. A rolling pinboard containing a display about the history of alpine huts in the park is placed directly in front of an older display about wilderness (Image 15). Peeking behind the board reveals quotes celebrating wilderness “as a necessity” (Image 16) and explaining that:

“the din of the dusty world the locked-in-ness of man’s cities are what man habitually abhors. Haze, mist, and the haunting spirits of the mountains are what human nature seeks and yet can rarely find. - Kuo His 11th century Chinese”

The story of Aoraki is uneasily juxtaposed with the history of mountaineering in the park. A colorful pamphlet about “Aoraki/Mount Cook – the ancestor of Ngāi Tahu” gives Aoraki’s genealogy and explains his significance to Ngāi Tahu (Doc 1999). It explains that the Tōpuni status “provides a very public symbol of Ngāi Tahu customary mana and rangatiratanga over the most prominent features of this national park” and is “an enduring symbol of the tribe’s commitment to conserving areas of high historical and natural values as well as ensuring an active role for Ngāi Tahu in the management of the national park.” It does not mention the settlement that established the concept of Tōpuni, a contrast to the section about Aoraki on the panel about the settlement at Haast (Image 17), which explains the role of the mountain in the redress of grievances:

“Aoraki/Mt Cook, Ngāi Tahu’s most important taonga (treasure) represents the commitment of Ngāi Tahu and the Crown to the Treaty partnership. The Crown will return the title of the mountain to the tribe, thus restoring mana. Ngāi Tahu will in turn gift Aoraki to the people of New Zealand as a sign of its enduring commitment to co-manage with the Crown areas of high historic, cultural and conservation value.”

A dual language panel (Image 18) about Te Kopaka (The Ice) recounts the story of Papa and Raki’s separation and explains how the ice on the peaks is “the tears of Raki frozen on the breast of Papa.” Also in the main interpretation room, an approximately A4 sized panel (Image 19) explaining that “Aoraki is a tapu (sacred) mountain” literally leans against another display. It urges me “to respect [Aoraki’s] value to the tangata whenua (the first peoples of this land) by not climbing to the summit.” This is a slightly confusing contrast with the standing floor display (Image 20) placed just outside the entrance to this room, which similarly explained that “modern Ngāi Tahu regard AORAKI as their

sacred mountain” and “know that many who try to climb him also share that regard.” The Mount Cook National Park Climbing Information fact sheet (Doc 1998) available in the information room provides logistical information about the best climbing season, alpine huts, registering intentions, and guidebooks describing routes, but does not resolve my question about whether one should climb to the top of Aoraki. It is only on the inside of the folded Aoraki pamphlet (Doc 1999) that I learn “Ngāi Tahu seek to encourage respect for their association with Aoraki by providing education materials to climbers and guides, explaining that standing on the very top of this mountain denigrates its tapu status.”

The overall impression is of improvised storytelling, with little of the sleekness of presentation I encountered in other visitor centres. A familiar story about what a national park is uneasily coexists with the “overlay” of Tōpuni status; world heritage status essentially remains unmentioned. If I had arrived in Mount Cook Village directly from the U.S., I probably would not have noticed the inconsistencies in the Aoraki narrative or the silence about Aoraki/Mount Cook’s inclusion in Te Wāhipounamu. However, after visiting the Haast Visitor Centre two days ago, the contrast is striking.

21 September 2007. Returning to Aoraki/Mount Cook, I find subtle changes from six months ago. The Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre is close to opening at the Hermitage to interpret climbing history. In the visitor centre, the juxtaposing of posters and merchandise is gone. A clearer separation now exists between the retail room and the model and memorial, provided by a small table with an anchor stone that was carried by waka up from the sea and the mahinga kai poster over it (Image 21). While the three panels about Aoraki are unchanged, a new display in the main information room explains how Ngāi Tahu values underlie the new rules about packing out all human waste in “poo pots” so it is not incorporated into sacred waters.

These and other similar experiences as participant-observer and tourist shaped both the questions and method of this year’s inquiry. Seeking to understand the varying emphasis and perspectives in storytelling I observed in Haast and Aoraki/Mount Cook, I turned to understanding the human and institutional processes that created them. The specific circumstances that created the representations I found in these interpretation sites illustrate how examining geographies of storytelling helps explain geographies of stories.

Selling the World Heritage Story: Haast Visitor Centre

In South Westland, telling the story of the global significance of the area’s wilderness in the 1989 World Heritage List nomination (DoC, Forest & Bird, & Ngāi Tahu 1989) was part of a larger process of shifting the meaning of this place from potentially productive forest to protected

conservation land (Chapter 4). Viewing South Westland forests as part of a national “version” of “heritage as naturalness” conflicted with regional and local versions of heritage that “focused on critical local culture, combining active intervention in land, whether in or outside the Crown estate, with protection” (Kirby 1997, p. 244). The result was intense local opposition to the world heritage nomination, particularly to the inclusion of the “stewardship land” of the Crown’s South Westland forests which did not have specific conservation protection (p. 245). West Coast communities resented “being asked to ‘atone for the removal of native forests throughout the rest of New Zealand’” (submission to West Coast Regional Development Council as quoted in Kirby 1997, p. 265). Kirby (1997, p. 245) suggests that “perhaps because of” the previous ambiguous legal status of the area, “South Westland was the only part of the proposed world heritage area where this status was explicitly interpreted, promoted and commodified.” Ten years later, the Haast Visitor Centre remains one of the few places within Te Wāhipounamu to specifically interpret the world heritage story to visitors. Understanding the way the Haast Visitor Centre was created as part of a larger community development enterprise helps explain why.

Kirby (1997, p. 245-303) chronicles the way local South Westland opposition to nominating Te Wāhipounamu was partially answered by a series of grants distributed by the government-appointed South Westland Environmental and Community Action Group (SWECAG). To succinctly summarize a complex process, a “centrally funded tourism and recreation package” redistributed funds to local communities who stood to lose most from the new conservation status of the forests. Concerns about loss of livelihoods created by locking up potentially productive land were answered by providing funds to initiatives to promote tourism in the area (p. 245). Kirby (1997, p. 262) characterises government concern for the communities as a matter of “political expediency” to protect Labour’s West Coast support.

A large proportion of the \$1.2 million of funding distributed by SWECAG went to DoC. The “key and most expensive” project was the building of a new visitor centre in Haast (Kirby 1997 p. 270-277), designed to provide a reason for tourists to spend a day or two in the area rather than simply passing through and especially to give them something to do on the West Coast’s frequent wet days (Murray Reedy, pers comm., 29/11/07). Other projects such as upgrading various roadside

interpretation and picnic facilities and constructing a walk near the highway through kahikatea forest also advanced the goal of creating tourist infrastructure around Haast. World heritage status provided the focus for the experience being sold to visitors: “Southern South Westland...has been identified in the Tourism Council’s marketing as being synonymous with the region’s World Heritage status. This is a marketing advantage that only a few locations can lay claim to” (SWECAG Final Report 5 as quoted in Kirby 1997, p.272). The interpretation at the visitor centre developed specifically as the result of market research DoC conducted in the process of designing the Haast Centre and was driven by concerns about how best to capture visitors’ attention and keep them in the area for longer (Murray Reedy, pers comm., 29/11/07).

The Haast Visitor Centre opened in 1991. With the exception of certain specific displays (e.g. the panel on the Ngāi Tahu settlement) added sometime around 2000 to meet new DoC obligations under the settlement, most of the interpretation I saw in 2007 was created in the 1991 storytelling process (Pam McDonald, pers comm., 7/8/07). The post-settlement addition of material probably explains the simultaneous tendencies I observed to treat the Māori story as historic (in older material) and recognize ongoing practices (in the newer ones). While some consider Haast the “best example of Interpretive approach in New Zealand” (Gerry McSweeney, pers comm., 21/1/08), the integration of human and natural stories interpreted here does not represent any radical new approach to interpretation or resolution of the DoC and Te Wāhipounamu-wide tension between natural and cultural values. Rather, interpretation materials in Haast developed originally from the economic imperative to highlight every possible attraction of the area in the most compelling way possible. Thus stories promoting wilderness coexist with human history stories which serve to peak one’s interest to take an afternoon to visit Ship Creek or stay and take a day trip to Jackson Bay. On-site interpretation at those locations completes the effect by linking back to the world heritage story (Image 22). The distribution of stories fits within ongoing West Coast conservancy efforts defined by the conservancy’s interpretation plan to emphasize different themes in specific locations which best epitomize the values being portrayed. World heritage provided a convenient way to synthesize the variety of themes being interpreted at sites around Haast, especially considering the area did not have pre-existing place-meanings as a national park like other parts of the world heritage area (Chapter 5).

However, UNESCO status was still seen by DoC staff as being only supplemental to the primary stories of natural and cultural values in the South Westland area.

Ultimately, the main impetus for any kind of storytelling in the Haast Visitor Centre was a desire to stop tourists in a place they otherwise would not have stopped. Though she didn't realize it, "spending ages" was exactly what DoC intended for the English woman I overheard to do in Haast. The goal of inspiring tourists to stay and put money into the local economy was certainly achieved with me and the folks I met at the Wilderness Accommodation Backpackers. The wider project to promote ecotourism as an economic alternative in the area also seems to have been successful, with a number of local companies now operating there who actively use the world heritage story to sell their product (e.g. Haast River Safari, n.d.; also see Chapter 3). In 1991, local residents held a symbolic wake to bury South Westland and express their feeling that conservation efforts and World Heritage listing was killing their community. Fourteen years later, the organizer of the wake told Gerry McSweeney, the author of the original Te Wāhipounamu expanded nomination proposal, that world heritage status and accompanying tourism development had been the "best thing" that could have happened (Gerry McSweeney, pers comm., 21/1/08).

Interpretation Fossils: Last Days of the Mount Cook/Aoraki Visitor Centre

The displays I saw at Aoraki/Mount Cook in 2007 were originally created in 1975 under DLS, explaining their focus on wilderness and people's appreciation of it, which reflects how DLS understood Mount Cook National Park at the time (Chapter 5). The need to update the visitor centre was recognized as early as 1994, when DoC's Aoraki/Mount Cook Village Development Review (Findlay 1994, p. 92) made two recommendations:

- “(i) the Visitor Centre as the major park interpretive facility requires major upgrading, and improved visitor orientation and focus.
- (ii) The Visitor Centre and associated open space should have greater physical relationship with the park...”

In 1996, there were minor updates made to the visitor centre, for example moving and rewiring the topographical model. This revamp was meant to be stage one of a larger redesign, but funding difficulties stalled the project. The information on Aoraki was added in response to the 1998 Ngāi Tahu settlement legislation. Money for a concept study to redesign the visitor centre was finally allocated in 2003, resulting in a concept plan in 2004. Though the project was put out for tender, it was again stalled by inadequate budget allocations. As of October 2007, construction is scheduled to begin in January of 2008, with the redesign scheduled to be complete by September 2008. A significantly larger project than the Whakapapa Visitor Centre revamp in Tongariro in 2001, the new visitor centre will be the largest visitor centre project DoC has undertaken since the Haast visitor centre in 1991 (Shirley Slatter, pers comm., 24/10/08).

In the meantime, staff attention in the Aoraki Area Office is focused on planning and implementing the redesign rather than on updating the existing but soon to be removed visitor centre displays. Staff are mindful that there is little information on world heritage and incomplete integration of Ngāi Tahu stories, but their focus in resolving these gaps is the new interpretation that will be in place by next year. To the frustration of seasonal ranger staff, technical difficulties with audio-visual equipment have prevented video presentations for the last four years; this issue too will be addressed in the larger redesign project (Shirley Slatter, pers comm., 24/10/08).

The improvised nature of some of the interpretation and my sense that it was still telling the story of Mt Cook National Park rather than Aoraki/Mount Cook as one national park within the larger Te Wāhipounamu area thus are explained by the age and DLS origins of the current main displays. With a comprehensive overhaul appearing always imminent since 1996, they have been only minimally modified in response to recent developments in the place meaning of Aoraki/Mount Cook. The crowded feeling seems to be explained by changing demands placed on visitor centres since the current structure was built; the area that now includes the shop and safety/logistical information was once completely devoted to interpretation (Vaughn Wood, pers comm., 15/9/07).

New Stories under Construction: Aoraki/Mount Cook Visitor Centre Redesign

When the redesigned Visitor Centre opens, probably in September 2008, it will tell the Aoraki/Mount Cook story in a significantly different way. The redesign project is being overseen by the Aoraki Area Office and headed by Community Relations Program Manager Shirley Slatter, who provided the information in this section in an interview conversation on 24 October 2007. Major contractors for the project include the architect, the landscape architect, and the interpretation consultant developing the specific stories, whose portfolio includes the Canterbury Museum discovery centre, and the historian writer responsible for the actual text. The theme for the visitor centre was developed by DoC staff before the project was put out for tender.

The new interpretation is based around the theme “the lure of the mountain” and the changing reasons people have been drawn to Aoraki/Mount Cook. This theme provides the framework to tell the other stories associated with the natural and cultural values of the area, including the Ngāi Tahu story, world heritage status, mountaineering, tourism, and ongoing research about scientific processes such as glaciations. The topics to be covered are designed to complement rather than compete with the Hermitage’s Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre experience, a for-profit museum which opened in December 2007 and interprets Sir Edmund Hillary, changing transportation in the region, and the history of the Hermitage Hotel itself. This private experience also has two sophisticated 3-D shows, a daytime one about Aoraki through the changing seasons that uses music and images as well as an evening one about the night sky. Whether visitors will find the paid experience a complement to or a replacement for the DoC visitor centre experience is as yet unclear.

Moving away from a traditional panels approach, the new DoC visitor centre is envisioned to feel more like a discovery centre such as those found in modern museums. Since large numbers of school children visit the park, the discovery centre will provide a multi-level experience, with basic information appearing on a sign for instance while opening a drawer provides more detail about a

topic. The multiple levels of storytelling will also facilitate accommodating visitors with different amounts of time, including the typical bus tourist who has about 20 minutes to spend.

One major architectural change is the addition of a large picture window facing the mountain, which will provide a strong visual focus and connection between the wider park environment and the visitor centre. At the end will be a memorial kiosk dedicated to those who have died in the park. This area will provide a new home for the existing memorial book. Recognizing the great impact the existing book has on visitors, the new Visitor Centre will let this darker side of the lure of the mountain story speak for itself.

As well as incorporating the lure of the mountain story into the architecture, practical considerations are also important. The new Visitor Centre will be a large two-story building, representing a complete gutting and rebuilding of the existing structure. The size is necessary because the visitor centre must be able to cater to three to four bus tours worth of people at a time without feeling crowded, particularly on wet days when everyone is inside. In order to accommodate multiple groups and keep the flow of people moving, a central audio-visual presentation is being replaced by a series of “theatrettes” which provide audio-visual material in short five or ten minute bursts. (A possible additional reason not suggested to me by anyone in DoC is that the theatrette approach also seems to minimize competition with the Hermitage.) Breaking up the flow of visitors has similarly influenced plans for a landscaped walkway around the outside of the building; a spiral centerpiece and water feature will provide a means to illustrate different mountain vegetation zones. The outside landscaping will also provide a logical space for the orange corrugated iron mountain hut being relocated to the village from its former alpine location for preservation purposes.

Reflecting the Ngāi Tahu associations with Aoraki/Mount Cook as agreed in the 1997 settlement is another major influence on the design. Seven weaving panels will be one of the first things the visitor sees upon entering. Timber from Tongariro is being used in the carvings that will accompany the weavings. The building’s shape will remain mountain-like, with the carving implicitly evoking the link between Aoraki as ancestor and the mountain. The 3-ton piece of Tongariro volcanic rock gifted by Ngāti Tuwharetoa to mirror the stone Ngāi Tahu gave for Whakapapa Visitor Centre will be incorporated into the landscaped area outside the building. Iwi stories and Aoraki’s genealogy

will likely be major topics within the displays, although the exact content of the interpretation has not yet been decided, since it is Ngāi Tahu rather than DoC directing which stories are told and how. The conservancy Pou Kura Taiao has recorded oral statements to be played to visitors illustrating how Ngāi Tahu people experience their connection with the mountain. Māori artwork is being used in the memorial kiosk, evoking the Ngāi Tahu belief that the soul departs this world from the top of the mountain. The tapu status of the summit and the disrespect shown by standing on the very top of the peak will likely be emphasized to climbers.

Fluid Meanings Made in Places

These snapshots of specific visitor centres, the stories they tell, and the storytelling processes that produced them emphasize how meaning is being continually made and remade in places. The meaning of Te Wāhipounamu as seen from Haast is not the same as from Aoraki/Mount Cook or Te Anau or Makarora. Neither is the story I found represented in March 2007 the same as it would have been in March 1996 or will be in October 2008.

Like the stories conveyed, DoC's and concessionaires' storytelling processes are location-specific and evolving. Throughout DoC, greater emphasis is being placed on interpretation in general and telling integrated stories of people and nature in particular, with exciting examples of new interpretation projects taking place in different ways in different conservancies and interacting with commercial tourism business in different ways. Such projects vary, however, in the speed at which they reach fruition and the resources available, and at times are hindered rather than helped by elements in DoC's existing institutional structure. Within a decentralized agency, variations between projects also result from the different ways storytellers define successful interpretation and the way they understand the significance of the locations they interpret. These different understandings are informally negotiated within the conservancies or even within the teams responsible for any given project rather than at the level of DoC as a whole. An additional factor contributing to variable place-

meanings is that unlike in the days of DLS, DoC is not the only group responsible for interpreting conservation lands; private businesses play a significant role, especially guides.

The tale of two visitor centres in this chapter also brings the thesis full circle with its explicit focus on my experiences as simultaneous tourist and researcher. Besides time, storytelling process, and location, stories are shaped by those who hear them. A geography of stories like that of Te Wāhipounamu I examined in this study ultimately is co-constituted by the storytellers and the story-viewers.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have told two intertwined stories about stories about nature. One is theoretical about what stories do and why storytelling matters in place-making and policy-making. The second, about the effect of the pristine narrative on place-meanings in southwest New Zealand, served as a case study to develop and illustrate the abstract relationships of the first. Storytelling has also served as my primary methodology. My own understanding emerged from an iterative process of observation and making sense of what I observed through writing. This reflexive consideration of my research journey as academic storytelling has similarly contributed to my theoretical arguments.

A Theoretical Story about Stories

This thesis began by asking general questions about the relationship between understandings of places and decisions about using or not using land in particular ways. Specifically, my aim was to understand the role histories and other stories (including academic ones) play in place-making. I also sought to explore the extent to which processes translating conceptions of landscape into reality are common across times, spaces and cultures and the extent to which these relationships are historically, geographically, and/or culturally specific.

My starting point in answering these questions was my training as a post-colonial environmental historian with a certain understanding of nature as socially constructed and of the importance of stories in explaining historic landscape change. In my home United States (as well as elsewhere), environmental historians view physical actions to modify (or not modify) landscapes as the result of how people in a particular era perceive nature. This conception of environmental history from which I began was elegantly expressed by William Cronon in 1992. Stressing that “because we use them to motivate and explain our actions, the stories we tell change the way we act in the world,”

he “urge[ed] upon environmental historians the task of telling not just stories about nature, but stories about stories about nature” (Cronon 1992, p. 1375).

My theory of stories extends and generalizes this way of analyzing past land use in order to answer questions about the development of contemporary place-meanings and understand their role in policy debates. Moving beyond the study of perceptions of nature in the past, I explored the common ways humans use narrative as a means of making sense of the world. I used insights from psychology, geography, education, and anthropology to argue that stories and histories are ways of knowing that allow people to perceive the passage of time, learn complex concepts, transmit cultural values, and maintain distinct identities. Based on my understanding of how stories simultaneously shape and reflect reality, I developed a model (Figure 2.1) of the iterative relationship over time between histories and stories, place-meanings, and policy-making.

My model conceives place-meanings as being formed from a *geography of stories* layered over time on a physical location and rooted in place. Past stories and histories of places combine to form dominant collective place-meanings within the wider society. Since place-meanings shape how people make decisions about land use, they are expressed through individuals’ sense-of-place feelings and laws about use of the area. By influencing what people believe to be the proper material interaction with a landscape, place-meanings are also literally inscribed on the physical environment through human labour. These customary relationships with land, its legal status, and its emotional significance in peoples’ hearts then feed into present stories about the place and influence future place-meanings, beginning the cycle again.

However, the process of aggregating multiple stories and histories about the non-human world into collective place-meanings does not happen in a social vacuum. Rather, this storytelling is fundamentally shaped by power-geometries between storytellers. Any dominant history results when multiple individual histories are reinforced or silenced through social or political negotiation of meaning. Thus understanding how past stories evolved into current place-meanings also requires understanding the varying degrees of power held by different storytellers and their resulting variable ability to ensure their stories are reflected in the dominant place-meanings that emerge.

My model also suggests how to study place-meanings, which cannot be seen directly but have to be glimpsed obliquely through representations. While a story is a mental construct people use to understand the world, a representation is a written, visual, or oral “text” that expresses the storyteller’s underlying understanding. Juxtaposing current representations of land provides a window to see the past stories about land which shaped them. However, these representations also must be placed within the context of past and current power-geometries between storytellers. Similarly, the story grasped by anyone viewing a representation is not necessarily identical to the one its storyteller intended to convey. Stories are co-constituted by those producing representations and those reading, viewing, or hearing them.

The Pristine Story in Southwest New Zealand

In this study I explored and illustrated the general relationships presented in my model using the pristine story, which portrays nature as separate from culture and thus outside human history. I focused my exploration on southwest New Zealand, an area chosen because of the multiple place-meanings I observed there on my first explorations of the South Island. I defined the boundaries of my case study as the area listed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List as Te Wāhipounamu South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area. Recognizing the predominant present use of southwest New Zealand revolves around recreation, tourism and nature conservation, I also included towns along the edges that are not officially included in the world heritage status designation but which are an integral part of the human geography of leisure and conservation within the area.

I began by mapping the geography of stories present in Te Wāhipounamu in 2007. I analyzed various representations of the area I encountered, focusing on official sources such as legislation, interpretation in visitor centres, and DoC publications. Realizing the importance of private business in shaping place-meanings, I also considered representations produced by commercial tourism operators. In this examination, I found multiple and overlapping stories about land, which I conveyed in Table 3.1. In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I then examined the historic origins and development of three dominant

narrative strands present in stories about this area – world heritage, national parks, and Ngāi Tahu cultural significance.

My historical geography of storytelling in southwest New Zealand emphasises that past ways of perceiving landscapes matter. At the same time, stories are fluid, always evolving as they are re-presented. Definitions of types of places such as wilderness, national park, and world heritage vary in time and over space. Thus understanding current place-meanings in Te Wāhipounamu requires both recognizing the continuing impact of the pristine story with its roots in nineteenth century Europe while remaining cognizant of the particularities of how the pristine was understood in a given time or location. Power-geometries and cultural differences in conceiving of the non-human world are vitally important as well, since the pristine story is itself culturally specific and obscures Ngāi Tahu ways of understanding Te Wāhipounamu.

Today, southwest New Zealand is globally seen as pristine nature, since this vast tenth of the nation has world heritage status under natural criteria. However, the impact of world heritage on national and local place-meanings has been limited and geographically uneven. In Chapter 4, I offered two explanations for its limited impact. First, even at the time of the nominations world heritage status was seen primarily as an overlay of global recognition of existing conservation practices and never intended to change how the four constituent national parks were understood or managed. Only in South Westland, where pre-existing place-meanings centred on extractive logging, did listing have a major impact on place-meanings. Around Haast, world heritage status today has become synonymous with the natural values to be protected – and sold to tourists (Chapter 7). Second, listing Te Wāhipounamu under natural criteria codified a pristine vision of the area that no longer matches the emerging cultural landscapes understanding of heritage in New Zealand. Specifically, it ignores the recognition in the 1990s of this landscape's significance to Ngāi Tahu. The difference is emphasized by comparison with Tongariro, where dual world heritage status reinforces both natural values of the volcanic landscape and the cultural significance of the area to Ngāti Tuwharetoa.

Stories of southwest New Zealand thus continue to centre on its status as DoC conservation land and specifically the four national parks which make up a large – and most iconic – portion of its area. Chapter 5 explored the changing meaning of national parks in New Zealand. It began by

exploring the long historic roots of seeing southwest New Zealand as pristine, arguing that this way of approaching land came to New Zealand with the first colonists. Dual nineteenth century ideas of wild land as something to be improved into pastoral landscapes and as something to preserve untouched for its moral redemptive qualities, while apparent in conservation movements in settler societies around the world, expressed themselves in particular ways in New Zealand. Until 1952, conservation took a variety of local forms even within New Zealand. Dissatisfied with this multiplicity of ways the pristine story was translated into land use, recreationalists and indigenous species advocates successfully lobbied for the National Park Act 1952. By creating a unified national park system, the 1952 act obscured local histories in southwest New Zealand to present the area as four key national parks in the national system of “crown jewels.” Place-meanings in southwest New Zealand today remain heavily influenced by country-wide meanings of conservation land, but cultural heritage has received increasing emphasis since the 1980s.

In Te Wāhipounamu, the main mechanism for recognition of alternate human stories in the national parks previously presented as pristine nature has been the Wai 27 Ngāi Tahu Claim before the Waitangi Tribunal (Chapter 6). The hearing process provided a forum for alternate stories about this area’s long significance to Ngāi Tahu, epitomized in the recasting of Mt Cook’s meaning as the story of the ancestor Aoraki. The claim also emphasized the way Pākehā conservation had been experienced by Ngāi Tahu as ongoing cultural colonization. The Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 represented a change in previous power-geometries, legislating official recognition of Ngāi Tahu stories as well as the iwi’s right to participate in storytelling processes such as the development of DoC interpretation materials. However, as the Aoraki/Mt Cook Visitor Centre story in Chapter 7 demonstrates, translating official stories into place-meanings is a slow process that happens at different speeds in different geographic locations.

The story of the pristine in southwest New Zealand therefore demonstrates the importance of locality and scale. Official storytelling which happens at national or international levels does not automatically change regional or local understandings of places. Stories about “this type of place” expressed in legislation are continually in dialogue with stories about the particular places gazetted as an instance of that type of place. In Te Wāhipounamu, the global story of world heritage did not

replace existing stories of the area as four national parks, partially because it did not correspond with the emerging national definition of New Zealand's heritage to include Māori meanings of landscape. Earlier, the National Park Act 1952's definition of national parks as a type of place largely obscured specific histories of "this place" in the tourist areas of Mt Cook, Fiordland, and the Westland glaciers. Their human history was placed within a national and even international framework of national parks as an inevitable movement towards human progress, as both DLS accounts and academic histories of the time illustrate. At the same time, these cases show how specific local expressions of types of places contribute to evolving understandings of the category. Shifts in New Zealand and Australia's national definitions of heritage to recognize the significance of land to indigenous peoples were influential in the 1993 expansion of the world heritage criteria to include cultural landscapes. Similarly, formally gazetted as national parks in the 1950s iconic areas of Fiordland, Mt Cook, and Westland already associated with national identity contributed to views of parks under DLS as symbols of New Zealand national character.

The evolving negotiation over place-meanings in southwest New Zealand also illustrates the arguments my model makes about the role of current stories in future place-meanings. In Te Wāhipounamu, the story of conservation is slowly changing to reflect the area's importance to Ngāi Tahu. But as yet the effect is mainly limited to official interpretation materials produced by DoC, which is legally required to give Ngāi Tahu a voice in their production. The story I observed in the Aoraki/Mt Cook Visitor Centre nine years after the settlement demonstrates the process is slow and influenced by storytelling processes that remain largely based in Pakeha institutions. There are also questions of how much Ngāi Tahu perspectives can be reconciled with a conservation project founded on the European assumption of nature as separate from people. My model suggested three mechanisms by which future place-meanings evolve from present ones – law, customary material use, and emotional attachment. While the legal status of southwest New Zealand now recognizes Ngāi Tahu perspectives, this may remain only legislative rhetoric if recognition of Ngāi Tahu stories is not translated into peoples' hearts and their physical interaction with the landscape. It remains to be seen if the dominant Pakeha society – and especially the two dominant lobbies of FMC and Forest & Bird – will incorporate Ngāi Tahu significance into their senses of place in areas long viewed as pristine

recreational playgrounds and strongholds of biodiversity. There are also difficult questions about incorporating Ngāi Tahu views into resource management practice in the face of strong public attachment to previous place-meanings, as Hemmingsen (2004) so persuasively demonstrated for coastal areas. Finally, Ngāi Tahu place-meanings themselves are constantly evolving, which may mean new ways of translating stories of cultural significance into land use. Ngāi Tahu's wish for Aoraki to remain a national park for the people of New Zealand and their Aoraki Bound collaboration with Outward Bound suggest that Ngāi Tahu stories can similarly translate into using southwest New Zealand for recreation and conservation, albeit with different cultural conceptions of the area.

The story of the pristine in Te Wāhipounamu thus suggests storytelling can be an integral part of policy-making, but that stories cannot simply be legislated. Ngāi Tahu stories have begun to be incorporated into dominant place-meanings as a result of shifts in the power-geometries between storytellers precipitated by legislation giving Ngāi Tahu an explicit voice in how the area is represented and used. As Chapter 7 demonstrated, that voice is heard in specific spaces in different ways. Though not explicitly explored within this thesis, we must also remember that the storytellers are only half the process; the extent to which telling stories influences place-meanings also depends on those reading, hearing, or viewing stories. My own understanding of the displays at Aoraki/Mt Cook was influenced not only by the signs present in the visitor centre, but also by my previous study of the pristine as erasing indigenous perspectives in the United States, which made me especially attentive to possible silences.

The Story of My Research Journey

Throughout my research, I consciously paid attention to how my own experiences shaped my conclusions, applying my arguments about storytelling to my own work. Reflexively including my story provided a second means for developing and illustrating my theory of stories while also contributing to my emerging academic identity as a geographer. Storytelling thus served as not only my subject but also as my overall method in this thesis.

Cronon's conception of writing history as storytelling provided a starting point for developing this method. At the same time I extended environmental history into my theory of stories, I extended Cronon's conception to develop an interdisciplinary methodology of conscious academic storytelling. Rather than writing an environmental history, I used history as a tool for a geographical study of place-making. Specifically, I used histories of the pristine in New Zealand to tell a theoretical story about what stories and histories do.

One challenge of this methodology of stories was the lack of shared starting assumptions with other scholars. Recognizing multiplicities of academic stories and histories can quickly become a slippery slope of relativism without a means for judging academic rigour. Cronon suggests that part of how we distinguish the validity of different versions is by working within a community of scholars who share our starting assumptions. As I moved into the murky waters of interdisciplinary research, I found myself in the borderlands between disciplines, where the shared community of scholars and shared assumptions about approach are much less defined. Addressing this challenge in qualitative social science research, Garman and Piantanida (2006) suggest that a methodology is more than what you do; rather it is the philosophical basis you use to persuade others of the truth of your conclusions. One key means I have used to persuade others about the truth of my theory of stories by reflexively applying its analysis to my own research process.

One implication of this reflexivity is the way I approached representations of landscape. Rather than just considering the context of past representations, as I had previously done as a historian, I also explicitly considered the contemporary power-geometries within which representations of land are produced and viewed in the manner of a geographer. I sought out official stories of southwest New Zealand and explored the way they reflected negotiations between their storytellers. I analyzed my own participant-observation experiences in visitor centres in light of how and by whom they were created. The same concern over power and sources extended to my use of others' academic stories. In recounting Ngāi Tahu stories, I consciously sought out scholars who have been endorsed as culturally valid by Ngāi Tahu. In the case of national parks, my attention to the power-geometries underlying academic stories created a bit of a dilemma. Since the existing histories of national parks are predominantly whiggish celebrations that do not acknowledge the cultural

colonization of past conservation, my national park story had to infer more about southwest New Zealand than I would have liked. One major conclusion from my examination of national parks is that someone needs to write a locally grounded but post-colonial and transnational study of New Zealand ideas about parks and their expression in changing land use policies within them. Another implication of my struggles to write Chapter 5 is that using history as a tool to examine present place-meanings relies on the existence of histories sensitive to how meaning is fluid over time, place, and culture.

As a post-colonial scholar, I also explicitly paid attention to my own-power geometry in relation to my research subject. From the beginning, I was conscious of the opportunities and limitations of studying place-meanings within a culture that is not my own in a place where I had just arrived. Recognizing long histories of academic research as a form of silencing, in the case of Ngāi Tahu stories I sought the guidance of those with more experience and remained humble. This same approach of listening closely to New Zealanders and remaining humble shaped my interaction with those who provided oral histories in interview conversations. These conversations represent a process of co-producing meaning; sometimes I explicitly tested my evolving understanding of how or why something happened and used their feedback to correct or modify or reinforce it.

At the same time, these conversations were also the initial step in forming relationships with those with whom I spoke. Research using people as sources influences academic storytelling in a different manner to textual sources, providing benefits of interactivity but potentially constraints as well. For instance, there was one quote from a conversation I wanted to use which poignantly demonstrated the extent to which DoC attitudes towards conservation in New Zealand remain influenced by colonialism. However, realizing the political sensitivity of DoC-Ngāi Tahu power dynamics, I decided to explicitly check about using the quote. I was not surprised when my DoC contact asked me to leave it out of the story. While without the quote that particular argument is a little less forceful, it would have been a breach of trust in an emerging relationship to use the quote and place the person (or even the conservancy if done anonymously) in a position of having to defend the remark. My thesis story too has been shaped by its storytelling context and the human relationships between storytellers from which it resulted.

Like any other story my model examines, my thesis is the product of an iterative relationship between past and emerging understanding. Its arguments have been shaped by my own past experiences as a storyteller. Besides the influence of my environmental history training already discussed, my understanding of the “wilderness myth” in the United States determined my initial approach to the pristine story in New Zealand. My responses to representations of the Southern Alps were shaped by past experiences living in and studying the Colorado Rockies. From the first images I saw sitting on the plane in Los Angeles, however, I have been watching my own understanding of place-meanings in New Zealand evolve in the same way stories everywhere are continually changing.

Like place-meanings, formed by telling stories about land, my knowledge of the topics in this thesis developed from my own efforts to narrate, providing a poignant and personal example of what I argue about stories as ways of knowing. Through journaling, multiple iterations of drafts, and explaining my research to others, I have created my own understanding. Writing this thesis has been an act of storytelling. Literally living my methodology, I have continually tweaked the component parts in order to produce a coherent story in the whole. Writing this thesis has been an experience of exploring how and why storytelling matters through my own narration of two intertwined stories about stories about nature. At the same time, it has been an experience of studying place-making – and reflecting on how scholars can and should study place-making – in place.

Beyond every story, of course, is another story. The breadth of its questions means this thesis throughout has been illustrative rather than comprehensive. Much remains to be said both about the general role of stories in land use decisions as well as the impact of the pristine story in New Zealand. Recognizing the multiple stories to be told on any subject and continual evolution of meaning, this thesis represents one storyteller’s present understanding of these theoretical relationships and of evolving place-meanings in southwest New Zealand. Perhaps its most important conclusion is to emphasize how many additional stories remain to be told about the importance of stories and histories in shaping place-meanings and thereby influencing policy-making in varying times, locations, and cultures.

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List of Interview Conversations

** = conversation by email*

TSO = Technical Support Officer

William Bevil, TSO – Interpretation, DoC Head Office, Wellington (19/6/07)

Kay Booth, Recreation and Tourism Associates, Rata Consultants Limited, Christchurch (25/6/07)

Jackie Breen, TSO – Historic Resources, DoC West Coast Conservancy (21/3/07, 11/5/07)

Fiona Colquhoun, Senior TSO (Interpretation), DoC Head Office, Wellington (19/6/07)

Paul Dingwall, scientist and policy-maker, formerly of DoC, DLS, & UNESCO (29/11/07)

Kara Edwards, Pou Kura Taiao, DoC West Coast Conservancy (22/2/08)*

Rachael Egerton, Historic Resource Management. TSO, DoC Southland Conservancy (8/5/07, 22/6/07)

Mat Ellison, Pou Kura Taiao, DoC Otago Conservancy (28/1/08)

Janelle Warren Findlay, Associate Professor of History (& former Ian Axford Fellow), Arizona State University (30/10/07)*

Corrie Francis, animator & filmmaker, South Lake Tahoe, California (17/7/07)*

Brent Guy, Programme Manager Community Relations, Ruapehu Area Office, Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy (31/8/07)

Ian Hill, TSO – Historic Heritage, DoC Canterbury Conservancy (26/7/07)

Paul Mahoney, National Coordinator Historic Heritage, DoC Head Office, Wellington (22/6/07)

Gerry McSweeney, Wilderness Lodge (& former Forest & Bird Conservation Director) (21/1/08)

Joan McCallum, Senior TSO (Historic), DoC Head Office, Wellington (22/6/07)

Pam McDonald, Programme Manager Visitor Information, South Westland Area Office, DoC West Coast Conservancy (7/8/07)

Alexander Miller, Mount Cook Ski Planes (& formerly of Westland National Park, DLS), Franz Josef (21/3/07)

Les Molloy, Heritage Works (& former DSIR Scientist and DoC Interpretation Coordinator), Wellington (14/11/07)*

Graeme Murray, Earth & Sky, Tekapo (14/5/07, 21/9/07)

Sir Tipene O'Regan, Ngāi Tahu tribal leader and former Member New Zealand Conservation Board (16/10/07)

Michael Orchard, formerly of New Zealand Forest Service, Hokitika (20/3/07)

Janet Orchard, Executive Officer, West Coast Conservation Board (12/5/07)

Geoff Park, ecologist, historian & author, Wellington (12/6/07)

Participants of DoC “Historic Heritage-Basic Principles” training, held in Hamilton (4-5/9/07)

Rachel Puentener, Environmental Advisor – Taonga Tuku Iho Kaupapa Taiao, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (16/1/08)

Murray Reedy, DoC West Coast Conservancy (& former Westland National Park Chief Ranger) (29/11/07)

Kirstie Ross, Curator, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington (14/6/07)

Lou Sanson, Chief Executive, Antarctica New Zealand (formerly of DoC Southland Conservancy) (14/8/07)

Shirley Slatter, Community Relations Program Manager, Aoraki Area Office, DoC Canterbury Conservancy (24/10/07)

Staff and Guides of Fiordland Wilderness Expeditions (22-23/12/07)

Te Taumutu Rūnanga members, Ngāti Moki Marae (15-16/3/07, 17/8/07)

Dave Veart, TSO – Archaeology, Auckland Area Office, DoC Auckland Conservancy (4/9/07)

Bruce Watson, former West Coast Conservator, Hokitika (21/3/07)

Ian Wedde, author of fictional tourism satire *The Viewing Platform* (15/6/07)

Carla Wilson, World Heritage Manager. DoC Head Office, Wellington (3/12/07)